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The Bibelot

A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, chosen in part from scarce editions and sources not generally known . . . .

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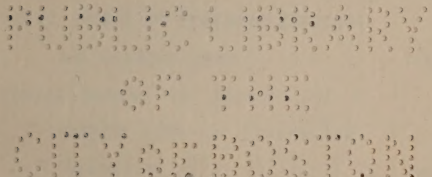

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The Bibelot

I.

Of the many golden argosies of Literature that have put to sea and come to shipwreck The Dark Blue *is a memorable example. Begun under the editorial supervision of John C. Freund, a name that one scarcely remembers to have seen elsewhere mentioned, it ran its monthly course from March, 1871, to and inclusive of March, 1873. Years afterward Mr. Andrew Lang, who was a contributor, said of it in his inimitably wise and waggish way:* "The Dark Blue *tried to rival the popular magazines, and had a chequered career, which would be amusing, if not instructive, if it could be told. Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Rossetti were contributors, and so at first were other distinguished writers. But of this venture, as of another, the poet might have written, 'So far our barque hath sailed without a cheque.'* " [1]

[1] *The bibliography of* The Dark Blue *is somewhat to seek. Usually described as consisting of four volumes, "all published," in the set which we own, evidently bound up for a collector, there is No. 1 of Vol. V, (for March, 1873). Henceforth, so far as we can discover, "the rest is silence."*

If, as stated in the editor's Address to the Public, *prefixed to the second volume, his purpose was to "combine the salient points of existing monthly periodicals," and accordingly "determined that an appeal should be made to the members of the University of Oxford . . . begging them to contribute," it is passing strange that none of Pater's Renaissance studies which he had begun to print elsewhere should be found in these pages. That the appeal, however, was "at first" successful, an examination of the earliest numbers containing articles by Swinburne, Rossetti, and Morris, amply testify. That it came to an inglorious end the dearth of even passable reading matter in its final issue is as surely in evidence. Peace to its ashes!*

II.

Those who have followed the fortunes of The Bibelot *are by this time aware that we have made good its claim to be regarded as "a reprint of poetry and prose . . chosen . . from scarce editions and sources not generally known." And as we were the first to make over to the American book-lover the early English romances which William Morris was content to let die —*

if that had been possible,—in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine *for 1856, so we are now desirous of directing attention anew to certain Icelandic translations which, dating back to the year 1869, continued to engage the poet's mind up to the last days of his life.*

With this end in view we here reprint The Story of Frithiof the Bold[1] *as it originally appeared in* The Dark Blue *for March and April, 1871. At that date Morris was turned thirty-six, and midmost the writing and printing of* The Earthly Paradise. *One might fairly say that this Northern saga literature had become an obsession. We who know the resultant effect upon him know that English poetry holds no greater proof of Morris's mastery*

---

1 *This "fine rendering of the legendary saga" had been preceded by* The Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue and Rafn the Skald *in the* Fortnightly Review *for January, 1869. In 1875 under the title of* Three Northern Love Stories, and other Tales, Translated from the Icelandic by Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris, *these two, with four additional stories, were revised and reissued in book form. That the* Frithiof *version as at first printed was wholly by Morris is implied by Mr. H. B. Forman,* (The Books of William Morris, *1897, p. 83). It is frankly asserted by Mr. Aymer Vallance,* (William Morris: a Record, *1898, p. 196*).

of such archaic story-telling than is given us in The Lovers of Gudrun *which later on flowered to its tragic full in the epic of* Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs. *Let us, then, turn to this antique love legend of Frithiof and the Fair Ingibiorg—the story of an old but not wholly forgotten day.*

FOR FEBRUARY:

THE STORY OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD
(Concluded.)

FOR MARCH:

SEVEN POEMS
BY FRANCIS THOMPSON.

THE STORY OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD:
TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC
By
WILLIAM MORRIS.

"THE *Frithiof* . . . is an example of the large class of romantic stories that took their present form in the fourteenth century, though it can scarcely be questioned that something of them must have existed in some guise at a much earlier date. Though the Frithiof Saga is not mentioned in any earlier work, it bears in one part signs of its having had an earlier form: for some of the (apparent) prose of it is really verse; and it is remarkable that this happens in the typical part of the tale, viz., where Frithiof comes disguised to King Ring." (Preface to *Three Northern Love Stories and other Tales. Translated from the Icelandic by Eiríkr Magnússon and William Morris. London, 1875.*)

THE STORY OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.[1]

Chapter I.

OF KING BELI AND THORSTEIN VIKINGSON AND THEIR CHILDREN.

THUS begins the tale, and tells how that King Beli ruled over the Sogni-folk; three children had he, whereof Helgi was his first son, and Halfdan his second, but Ingibiorg his daughter. Ingibiorg was fair of face and wise of mind, and she was ever accounted the foremost of the king's children.

Now a certain strand went west of the firth, and a great stead was thereon, which was called Baldur's Meads; a Place of Peace was there, and a great temple, and round about it was a hedge of pales: many gods were there, but amidst them all Baldur was held of most account. In such reverence did the heathen men hold this stead, that they would have no hurt done therein

[1] This tale is the original of the Swedish Bishop Tegnér's 'Frithiof's Saga,' a long modern poem, which has a great reputation, but bears little enough relation, either in spirit or matter, to its prototype.

to man nor beast, nor might any man have dealings with a woman there.

Syrstrand was the name of that stead whereas the king dwelt; but on the other side the firth was an abode named Framness, where dwelt a man called Thorstein, the son of Viking; and his stead was over against the king's dwelling.

Thorstein had a son by his wife called FRITHIOF: he was the tallest and strongest of men, and more skilled in all prowess than any other man, even from his youth up. Frithiof the Bold was he called, and so well beloved was he, that all prayed for good things for him.

Now the king's children were but young when their mother died; but a good man of Sogni named Hilding, prayed to have the king's daughter to foster; so there was she reared well and heedfully: and she was called Ingibiorg the Fair. Frithiof also was fostered of goodman Hilding, wherefore was he foster-brother to the king's daughter, and they two were peerless among children.

Now King Beli's chattels began to ebb fast away from his hands, for he was grown old.

Thorstein had rule over the third part of the realm, and in him lay the king's greatest strength.

Every third year Thorstein feasted the king at exceeding great cost, and the king feasted Thorstein the two years between. Helgi, Beli's son, turned early to sacrificing: neither were those brethren well-beloved.

Thorstein had a ship called Ellidi, which pulled fifteen oars on either board; curved was it stem and stern, and strong-built like an ocean-going ship, and its bulwarks were clamped with iron.

So strong was Frithiof that he pulled the two bow oars of Ellidi; but each oar was thirteen ells long, and two men pulled every oar other where.

Frithiof was deemed peerless amid the young men of that time, and the king's sons envied him, whereas he was more praised than they.

Now King Beli fell sick; and when the sickness lay heavy on him he called his sons to him and said to them: 'This sickness will bring me to my end, therefore will I bid you this, that ye hold fast to those old friends that I have had; for meseems in all

things ye fall short of that father and son, Thorstein and Frithiof, yea, both in good council and in hardihood. A mound ye shall raise over me.'

So with that Beli died.

Thereafter Thorstein fell sick; so he spake to Frithiof: 'Kinsman,' says he, 'I will crave this of thee, that thou bow thy will before the king's sons, for their dignity's sake; yet doth my heart speak goodly things to me concerning thy fortune. Now would I be laid in my mound over against King Beli's mound, down by the sea on this side the firth, whereas it may be easiest for us to cry out each to each of tidings drawing nigh.'

A little after this Thorstein departed, and was laid in mound even as he had bidden; but Frithiof took the land and chattels after him. Biorn and Asmund were Frithiof's foster-brethren; they were big and strong men.

Chapter II.

FRITHIOF WOOES INGIBIORG OF THOSE BRETHREN.

So Frithiof became the most famed of men, and the bravest in all things that may try a man.

Biorn, his foster-brother, he held in most account of all, but Asmund served the twain of them.

The ship Ellidi, the best of good things, he inherited from his father, and another possession therewith — a gold ring, the most precious in all Norway.

So bounteous a man was Frithiof withal, that it was the deeming of many, that he was a man of no less honour than those brethren, but it were for the name of king; and for this cause they held Frithiof in hate and enmity, and it was a heavy thing to them that he was called greater than they: withal they thought they could see that Ingibiorg, their sister, and Frithiof were of one mind together.

It befell hereon that the kings had to go to a feast to Frithiof's house at Framness; and there it happened according to wont

that he gave to all men beyond that they were worthy of. Now Ingibiorg was there, and she and Frithiof talked long together; and the king's daughter said to him:

'A goodly gold ring hast thou.'

'Yea, in good sooth,' said he.

Thereafter went those brethren to their own home, and greater grew their enmity of Frithiof.

A little after grew Frithiof heavy of mood, and Biorn, his foster-brother, asked him why he fared so.

He said he had it in his mind to woo Ingibiorg. 'For though I be named by a lesser name than those brethren, yet am I not fashioned lesser.'

'Even so let us do then,' quoth Biorn. So Frithiof fared with certain men unto those brethren; and the kings were sitting on their father's mound when Frithiof greeted them well, and then set forth his wooing, and prayed for their sister Ingibiorg, the daughter of Beli.

The kings said: 'Not overwise is this thine asking, whereas thou would have us give her to one who lacketh dignity; wherefore we refuse thee this utterly.'

Said Frithiof: 'Then is my errand soon sped; but in return never will I give help to you henceforward, yea, though ye need it ever so much.'

They said they heeded it nought: so Frithiof went home, and was joyous once more.

Chapter III.

OF KING RING AND THOSE BRETHREN.

There was a king named Ring, who ruled over Ringrealm, which also was in Norway; a mighty county-king he was, and a great man, but come by now into his latter days.

Now he spake to his men: 'Lo, I have heard that the sons of King Beli have brought to nought their friendship with Frithiof, who is the noblest of men; wherefore will I send men to these kings, and bid them choose whether they will submit them to me and pay me tribute, or else that I fall on them: and all things then shall lie ready to my hand to take, for they have neither might nor wisdom to withstand me; yet great fame were it to my old age to overcome them.'

After that fared the messengers of King Ring, and found those brethren, Helgi and Halfdan, in Sogni, and spake to them thus: 'King Ring sends bidding to you to send him tribute, or else will he war against your realm.'

They answered and said that they would

not learn in the days of their youth what they would be loth to know in their old age, even how to serve King Ring with shame. 'Nay, now shall we draw together all the folk that we may.'

Even so they did; but now, when they beheld their force that it was but little, they sent Hilding their fosterer to Frithiof to bid him come help them against King Ring. Now Frithiof sat at the chess-play when Hilding came thither, who spake thus: 'Our kings send thee greeting, Frithiof, and would have thy help in battle against King Ring, who cometh against their realm with violence and wrong.'

Frithiof answered him nought, but said to Biorn, with whom he was playing: 'A bare place in thy board, foster-brother, and nowise mayst thou amend it; nay, for my part I shall fall on thy red piece there, and wot whether it be safe.'

Then Hilding spake again:

'King Hegli bade me say thus much, Frithiof, that thou shouldst go on this journey with them, or else look for ill at their hands when they at the last come back.'

'A double game, foster-brother,' said Biorn; 'and two ways to meet thy play.'

Frithiof said: 'Thy play is to fall on the king first, yet the double game is sure to be.'

No other outcome had Hilding: he went back speedily to the kings, and told them Frithiof's answer.

They asked Hilding what he made out of those words. He said:

'Whereas he spake of the bare place he will have been thinking of his place in this journey of yours; but when he said he would fall on the red piece, that will mean Ingibiorg, your sister, so give ye all the heed ye may to her. But whereas I threatened him with ill from you, Biorn deemed the game a double one; but Frithiof said that the king must be set on first, speaking thereby of King Ring.'

So then the brethren arrayed them for departing; but, ere they went, let bring Ingibiorg and eight women with her to Baldur's Meads, saying that Frithiof would not be so mad rash as to go see her thither, since there was none who durst make riot there.

Then fared those brethren south to Jardar, and met King Ring in Sogni Sound.

Now, herewith was King Ring most of all wroth that the brothers had said that they accounted it a shame to fight with a man so old that he might not get a-horseback unholpen.

Chapter IV.

FRITHIOF GOES TO BALDUR'S MEADS.

Straightway whenas the kings were gone away Frithiof took his raiment of state and set the goodly gold ring on his arm; then went the foster-brethren down to the sea and launched Ellidi. Then said Biorn: 'Whither away, foster-brother?'

'To Baldur's Meads,' said Frithiof, 'to be glad with Ingibiorg.'

Biorn said: 'A thing unmeet to do, to make the gods wroth with us.'

'Well, it shall be risked this time,' said Frithiof, 'and withal, more to me is Ingibiorg's grace than Baldur's grame.'

Therewith they rowed over the firth, and went up to Baldur's Meads and to Ingibiorg's bower, and there she sat with eight maidens, and the new comers were eight also.

But when they came there, lo, all the place was hung with cloth of pall and precious webs.

Then Ingibiorg arose and said:

'Why art thou so overbold, Frithiof, that thou art come here without the leave of my brethren to make the gods angry with thee?'

Frithiof says: 'However that may be, I hold thy love of more account than the gods' hate.'

Ingibiorg answered: 'Welcome art thou here, thou and thy men!'

Then she made place for him to sit beside her, and drank to him in the best of wine; and thus they sat and were merry together. Then beheld Ingibiorg the goodly ring on his arm, and asked him if that precious thing were his own; Frithiof said Yea, and she praised the ring much. Then Frithiof said:

'I will give thee the ring if thou wilt promise to give it to no one, but to send it to me when thou no longer shalt have will to keep it: and hereon shall we plight troth each to other.'

So with this troth-plighting they exchanged rings.

Frithiof was oft at Baldur's Meads a-night time, and every day between whiles would he go thither to be glad with Ingibiorg.

Chapter V.

THOSE BRETHREN COME HOME AGAIN.

Now tells the tale of those brethren, that they met King Ring, and he had more folk than they: then went men betwixt them, and sought to make peace, so that no battle should be: thereto King Ring assented on such terms that the brethren should submit them to him, and give him in marriage Ingibiorg their sister, with the third part of all their possessions.

The kings said Yea thereto, for they saw that they had to do with overwhelming might: so the peace was fast bound by oaths, and the wedding was to be at Sogni whenas King Ring should go see his betrothed.

So those brethren fare home with their folk, right ill content with things. But Frithiof, when he deemed that the brethren might be looked for home again, spake to the king's daughter:

'Sweetly and well have ye done to us, neither has goodman Baldur been wroth with us; but now as soon as ye wot of the kings' coming home, spread the sheets of

your beds abroad on the Hall of the Gods, for that is the highest of all the garth, and we may see it from our stead.'

The king's daughter said: 'None taught thee this but thyself: ah, certes we welcome dear friends whenas ye come to us.'

So Frithiof went home; and the next morning he went out early and when he came in, then he spake and sang:

Now must I tell
To our good men
That over and done
Are our fair journeys;
No more a-shipboard
Shall we be going,
For there are the sheets
Spread out a-bleaching.

Then they went out, and saw that the Hall of the Gods was all covered with white linen. Then spake Biorn: 'Now are the kings come home, and but a little while have we to sit in peace, and good were it, meseems, to gather folk together.'

So did they, and men came flocking thither.

Now the brethren soon heard of the ways of Frithiof and Ingibiorg, and of the gathering of men. So King Helgi spake:

'A wondrous thing how Baldur will bear what shame soever Frithiof and she will lay on him! Now will I send men to him, and wot what atonement he will offer us, or else will I drive him from the land, for our strength seemeth to me not enough that we should fight with him as now.'

So Hilding, their fosterer, bare the king's errand to Frithiof and his friends, and spake in such wise: 'This atonement the kings will have of thee, Frithiof, that thou go gather the tribute of the Orkneys, which has not been paid since Beli died, for they need money, whereas they are giving Ingibiorg their sister in marriage, and much of wealth with her.'

Frithiof said: 'This thing only somewhat urges us to peace, the good will of our kin departed; but no trustiness will those brethren show herein. But this condition I make, that our lands be in good peace while we are away.' So this was promised and all bound by oaths.

Then Frithiof arrays him for departing, and is captain of men brave and of good help, eighteen in company.

Now his men asked him if he would not

go to King Helgi and make peace with him, and pray himself free from Baldur's wrath.

But he answered: 'Hereby I swear that I will never pray Helgi for peace.'

Then he went aboard Ellidi, and they sailed out along the Sognifirth.

But when Frithiof was gone from home, King Halfdan spake to Helgi his brother: 'Good it were for the ruling of the land if Frithiof had payment for his masterful deed: now therefore let us burn his stead, and bring on him and his men such a storm on the sea as shall make an end of them.'

Helgi said it was a thing meet to be done.

So then they burned up clean all the stead at Framness and robbed it of all goods; and after that sent for two witch-wives, Heidi and Hamglom, and gave them money to raise against Frithiof and his men so mighty a storm that they should all be lost at sea. So they sped the witch-song, and went up on the witch-mount with spells and sorcery.

Chapter VI.

FRITHIOF SAILS FOR THE ORKNEYS.

So when Frithiof and his men were come out of the Sognifirth there fell on them great wind and storm, and an exceeding heavy sea: but the ship drave on swiftly, for sharp built she was, and the best sailer afloat.

So now Frithiof sang:

Oft let I swim from Sogni
My tarred ship sooty-sided,
When maids sat o'er the mead-horn
Amidst of Baldur's Meadows;
Now while the storm is wailing
Fare well I bid you maidens,
Still shall ye love us, sweet ones,
Though Ellidi the sea fill.

Said Biorn: 'Thou mightest well find other work to do than singing songs over the maids of Baldur's Meadows.'

'Of such work shall I not speedily run dry, though,' said Frithiof.

And he sang withal:

Now is the sea a-swelling,
And sweepeth the rack onward;
Spells of old days cast o'er us
Make ocean all unquiet;

No more shall we be striving
Mid storm with wash of billows,
But Solundir shall shelter
Our ship with ice-beat rock-walls.

So they lay to under the lee of the Solundir Isles, and were minded to abide there; but straightway thereon the wind fell; then they turned away from under the lee of the islands, and now their voyage seemed hopeful to them, because the wind was fair awhile: but soon it began to freshen again.

Then sang Frithiof:

In days foredone
From Framness strand
I sailed to meet
Sweet Ingibiorg;
But now I sail
Through storm and cold,
And wide away
My long-worm drives.

And now when they were come far out into the main, once more the sea waxed wondrous troubled, and a storm arose with so great drift of snow, that none might see the stem from the stern; and they shipped seas, so that they must be ever a-baling. So Frithiof sang:

The salt waves see we nought
As seaward drive we ever
Before the witch-wrought wind,
We well-famed kings-defenders:
Hero are we all a-standing,
With all Solundir hull-down,
Eighteen brave lads a-baling
Black Ellidi to bring home.

Said Biorn: 'Needs must he who fareth far fall in with mishaps.'

'Yea, certes, foster-brother,' said Frithiof. And he sang withal:

Helgi it is that helpeth
The white-head billows' waxing;
Cold time unlike the kissing
In the close of Baldur's Meadow!
So is the hate of Helgi
To that heart's love she giveth.
O would that here I held her,
Gift high above all gifts!

'Maybe,' said Biorn, 'she is thinking of some one in better case than thou: what matter when all is said?'

'Well,' says Frithiof, 'now is the time to show ourselves to be men of avail, though blither tide it was at Baldur's Meadows.'

So they turned to in manly wise, for there were the bravest of men come together

in the best ship of the Northlands. But Frithiof sang a stave:

> The salt waves see we nought
> Seaward and westward driven
> Well is the water now
> Like wild-fire cast about:
> The great seawaves wash onward,
> Swan-white the hills are tossing:
> Ellidi walloweth ever
> 'Mid steep uneasy billows.

Then they shipped a huge sea, so that all stood a-baling. But Frithiof sang:

> With love-moved mouth the maiden
> Doth pledge me though I sink.
> Ah! bright sheets lay a-bleaching,
> East there on brents the swan loves.

Biorn said: 'Art thou of mind belike that the maids of Sogni will weep many tears over thee?'

'Certes,' said Frithiof, 'that was in my mind.'

Therewith so great a sea broke over the bows, that the water came in like a river; but it availed them much that the ship was so good, and the crew aboard her so hardy.

Now sang Biorn:

No widow, methinks,
To thee or me drinks;
No ring-bearer fair
Biddeth draw near;
Salt are our eyne
Soaked in the brine;
Strong our arms are no more,
And our eyelids smart sore.

Quoth Asmund: 'Small harm though your arms be tried somewhat, for no pity we had from you when we rubbed our eyes whenas ye must needs rise early a-mornings to go to Baldur's Meadows.'

'Well,' said Frithiof, 'why singest thou not, Asmund?'

'Not I,' said Asmund; yet sang a ditty straightway:

Sharp work about the sail
When o'er the ship seas tumbled
And there was I a-working
Within-board 'gainst eight balers;
Better it was to bower,
Bringing the women breakfast,
Than here to be 'mid billows
Black Ellidi a-baling.

'Thou accountest thy help full high,' said Frithiof, laughing therewith; 'but sure it showeth the thrall's blood in thee that thou wouldst fain be a-waiting at table.'

Now it blew harder and harder yet, so that to those who were aboard the seas breaking on either side of them seemed liker to great cliffs and mountains than to waves.

Then Frithiof sang:

On bolster I sat
In Baldur's Mead erst,
And all songs that I could
To the king's daughter sang;
Now on Ran's [1] bed belike
Must I soon be a-lying
And another shall be
By Ingibiorg's side.

Biorn said: 'Terror lieth ahead of us, foster-brother, and now dread has crept into thy words, which is ill with such a good man as thou.'

Says Frithiof: 'Neither fear, nor fainting is it, though I sing now of those our merry journeys; yet perchance more has been said of them than need was; but most men would think death surer than life, if they were so bested as we be.'

'Yet shall I answer thee somewhat,' said Biorn, and sang:

[1] Ran is the sea goddess.

Yet one gain have I gotten
Thou gatst not 'mid thy fortune,
For meet play did I make
With Ingibiorg's eight maidens;
Red rings we laid together
Aright in Baldur's Meadow,
When far off was the warder
Of the wide land of Halfdan.

'Well,' said he, 'we must be content with things as they are, foster-brother.'

Therewith so great a sea smote them, that the bulwark was broken and both the sheets, and four men were washed overboard and all lost.

Then sang Frithiof:

Both sheets are bursten
'Mid the great billows,
Four swains are sunk
In the fathomless sea.

'Now, meseems,' said Frithiof, 'it may well be that some of us will go to the house of Ran, nor shall we deem us well sped if we come not thither in glorious array; wherefore it seems good to me that each man of us here should have somewhat of gold on him.'

Then he smote asunder the ring, Ingibiorg's gift, and shared it between all his men, and sang a stave withal:

> The red ring here I hew
> Once owned of Halfdan's father,
> The rich lord of our land,
> Ere the sea lay us low;
> So on the guests shall gold be,
> If we have need of guesting;
> Meet so for mighty men
> Amid Ran's hall to be.

'Not all so sure is it that we come there,' said Biorn, 'and yet it may well be so.'

Now Frithiof and his folk found that the ship had great way on her, and they knew not what lay ahead, for all was mirk on either board, so that none might see the stem or stern from amidships; and therewith was there great drift of spray amid the furious wind, and frost, and snow, and deadly cold. Now Frithiof went up to the masthead, and when he came down he said to his fellows: 'A sight exceeding wondrous have I seen, for a great whale went in a ring about the ship, and I misdoubt me that we come nigh to some land, and that he is keeping the shore against us; for certes

King Helgi has dealt with us in no friendly wise, neither will this his messenger be friendly; moreover I saw two women on the back of the whale, and they it is who will have brought this great storm on us with the worst of spells and witchcraft; but now we shall try which may prevail, my fortune or their trollship, so steer ye at your straightest, and I will smite these evil things with beams.' Therewith he sang a stave:

See I troll women
Twain on the billows,
E'en they whom Helgi
Hither hath sent.
Ellidi now
Or ever her way stop
Shall smite the backs
Of these asunder.

So tells the tale that this wonder went with the good ship Ellidi, that she knew the speech of man.

But Biorn said: 'Now may we see the treason of those brethren against us.' Therewith he took the tiller, but Frithiof caught up a forked beam, and ran into the prow, and sang a stave:

Ellidi, hail!
Leap high o'er the billows!
Break of the troll wife
Brow or teeth!
Break cheek or jaw
Of the cursed woman,
One foot or twain
Of this foul thing.

Therewith he drave his fork at one of the skinchangers, and the beak of Ellidi smote the other on the back, and the backs of both were broken; but the whale plunged down and gat him gone, and they never saw it after. Then the wind fell, but the ship lay waterlogged; so Frithiof called out to his men, and bade bale out the ship, but Biorn said:

'No need to work now, verily!'

'Be thou not afeard, foster-brother,' said Frithiof, 'ever was it the wont of good men of old time to be helpful while they might, whatsoever should come after.'

And therewith he sang a stave:

No need, fair fellows,
Death to fear;
Rather be glad,
Good men of mine:
For if dreams wot aught

All nights they say
That I yet shall have
My Ingibiorg.

Then they baled out the ship; and they were now come nigh unto land; but there was yet a flaw of wind in their teeth. So then did Frithiof take the two bow oars again, and rowed full mightily. Therewith the weather brightened, and they saw that they were come out to Effia Sound, and so there they made land.

The crew were exceeding weary; but so stout a man was Frithiof that he bore eight men a-land over the fore-shore, but Biorn bore two, and Asmund one. Then sang Frithiof:

Fast bare I up
To the fire-lit house
My men all dazed
With the drift of the storm:
And the sail moreover
To the sand I carried;
With the might of the sea
Is there no more to do.

Chapter VII.

FRITHIOF AT THE ORKNEYS.

Now Earl Angantyr was at Effia whenas Frithiof and his folk came a-land there. But his way it was, when he was sitting at the drink, that one of his men should sit at the watch-window, looking weatherward from the drinking hall, and keep watch there. From a great horn drank he ever; and still as one was emptied another was filled for him. And he who held the watch when Frithiof came a-land was called Hall-ward; and now he saw where Frithiof and his men went, and sang a stave:

Men see I a-baling
Amid the storm's might;
Six bale on Ellidi
Seven are a-rowing;
Like is he in the stem,
Straining hard at the oars,
To Frithiof the bold,
The brisk in the battle.

So when he had drunk out the horn, he cast it in through the window, and spake to the woman who gave him drink:

Take up from the floor,
O fair-going woman,
The horn cast adown
Drunk out to the end!
I behold men at sea
Who, storm-beaten, shall need
Help at our hands
Ere the haven they make.

Now the Earl heard what Hallward sang; so he asked for tidings, and Hallward said: 'Men are come a-land here, much fore-wearied, yet brave lads belike: but one of them is so hardy that he beareth the others ashore.'

Then said the Earl, 'Go ye, and meet them, and welcome them in seemly wise; if this be Frithiof, the son of Duke Thorstein, my friend, he is a man famed far and wide for all prowess.' Then there took up the word a man named Atli, a great viking, and he spake: 'Now shall that be proven which is told of, that Frithiof hath sworn never to be first in the craving of peace.' There were ten men in company with him, all evil, and outrageous, who often wrought berserksgang.

So when they met Frithiof they took to their weapons.

But Atli said:

'Good to turn hither, Frithiof! Meeting ernes should claw; and we no less, Frithiof! Yea, and now may'st thou hold to thy word, and not crave first for peace.'

So Frithiof turned to meet them, and sang a stave:

Nay, nay, in nought
Now shall ye cow us.
Hearts full of dread,
Dwellers in islands!
Alone with you ten
The fight will I try,
Rather than pray
For peace at your hands.

Then came Hallward thereto, and spake:

'The Earl wills that ye all be made welcome here: neither shall any set on you.'

Frithiof said he would take that with a good heart; howsoever, he was ready for either peace or war.

So thereon they went to the Earl, and he made Frithiof and all his men right welcome, and they abode with him, in great honour holden, through the winter-tide; and oft would the Earl ask of their voyage; so Biorn sang:

There baled we, wight fellows,
Washed over and over
On both boards
By billows;
For ten days we baled there,
And eight thereunto.

The Earl said: 'Well nigh did the king undo you; it is ill seen of such like kings as are meet for nought but to overcome men by wizardry. But now I wot,' says Angantyr, 'of thine errand hither, Frithiof, that thou art sent after the scat: whereto I give thee a speedy answer, that never shall King Helgi get scat of me, but to thee will I give money, even as much as thou wilt; and thou mayest call it scat if thou hast a mind to, or whatso else thou wilt.'

So Frithiof said that he would take the money.

Chapter VIII.

KING RING WEDS INGIBIORG.

Now shall it be told of what came to pass in Norway the while Frithiof was away: for those brethren let burn up all the stead at Framness. Moreover, while the weird sisters were at their spells they tumbled down from off their high watch-mount, and brake both their backs.

That autumn came King Ring north to Sogni to his wedding, and there at a noble feast drank his bridal with Ingibiorg.

'Whence came that goodly ring which thou hast on thine arm?' said King Ring to Ingibiorg.

She said her father had owned it, but he answered and said:

'Nay, for Frithiof's gift it is: so take it off thine arm straightway; for no gold shalt thou lack whenas thou comest to Elfhome.'

So she gave the ring to King Helgi's wife, and bade her give it to Frithiof when he came back.

Then King Ring wended home with his wife, and loved her with exceeding great love.

Chapter IX.

FRITHIOF BRINGS THE TRIBUTE TO THE KINGS.

The spring after these things Frithiof departed from the Orkneys and Earl Angantyr in all good liking; and Hallward went with Frithiof.

But when they came to Norway they heard tell of the burning of Frithiof's stead.

So when he was gotten to Framness, Frithiof said: 'Black is my house now; no friends have been at work here.' And he sang withal:

> Frank and free,
> With my father dead,
> In Framness old
> We drank aforetime;
> Now my abode
> Behold I burned;
> For many ill deeds
> The kings must I pay.

Then he sought rede of his men what was to be done; but they bade him look to it; then he said that the tribute must first be paid out of hand. So they rowed over the Firth to Syrstrand; and there they heard

that the kings were gone to Baldur's Meads to sacrifice to the gods; so Frithiof and Biorn went up thither and bade Hallward and Asmund break up meanwhile all ships, both great and small, that were anigh; and they did so. Then went Frithiof and his follow to the door at Baldur's Meads, and Frithiof would go in. Biorn bade him fare warily, since he must needs go in alone; but Frithiof charged him to abide without, and keep watch; and he sang a stave:

> And alone go I
> Unto the stead;
> No folk I need
> For the finding of kings;
> But cast ye the fire
> O'er the kings' dwelling,
> If I come not again
> In the cool of the dusk.

'Ah,' said Biorn, 'a goodly singing!'

Then went Frithiof in, and saw but few folk in the Hall of the Gods; there were the kings at their sacrifice, sitting a-drinking; a fire was there on the floor, and the wives of the kings sat thereby, a-warming the gods, while others anointed them, and wiped them with napkins.

So Frithiof went up to King Helgi and said: 'Have here thy scat!'

And therewith he raised up the purse wherein was the silver, and drave it on to the face of the king; whereby were two of his teeth knocked out, and he fell down stunned in his high seat; but Halfdan got hold of him, so that he fell not into the fire. Then sang Frithiof:

Have here thy scat,
High lord of the warriors!
Heed that and thy teeth,
Lest all tumble about thee!
Lo the silver abides
At the end of this bag,
That Biorn and I
Betwixt us have borne.

Now there were but few folk in the chamber, because the drinking was in another place; so Frithiof went out straightway along the floor, and beheld therewith that goodly ring of his on the arm of Helgi's wife as she warmed Baldur at the fire; so he took hold of the ring, but it was fast to her arm, and he dragged her by it over the pavement toward the door, and Baldur fell from her into the fire; then Halfdan's wife

caught hastily at Baldur, whereby the god that she was warming fell likewise into the fire, and the fire caught both the gods, for they had been anointed, and ran up thence into the roof, so that the house was ablaze; but Frithiof got the ring to him ere he came out. So then Biorn asked him what had come of his going in there; but Frithiof held up the ring and sang a stave:

> The heavy purse smote Helgi,
> Hard 'midst his scoundrel's visage;
> Lowly bowed Halfdan's brother,
> Fell bundling 'mid the high seat;
> There Baldur fell a-burning;
> But my bright ring I gat;
> Fast from the roaring fire
> The bent crone forth I dragged.

Men say that Frithiof cast a firebrand up on to the roof, so that the hall was all ablaze, and therewith sang a stave:

> Down stride we toward the strand,
> And strong deeds set a-going,
> For now the blue flame bickers
> Amidst of Baldur's Meadow.

And therewith they went down to the sea.

Chapter X.

FRITHIOF MADE AN OUTLAW.

But as soon as King Helgi had come to himself he bade follow after Frithiof speedily, and slay them all, both him and his fellows: 'A wrongdoer who heedeth no Place of Peace!' So they blew the assembly for the kings' men, and when they came out to the hall they saw that it was afire, so King Halfdan went thereto with some of the folk, but King Helgi followed after Frithiof and his men, who were by then gotten a-shipboard and were hard at it.

Now King Helgi and his men find that all the ships are scuttled, and they have to turn back to shore, and have lost some men: then waxed the king so wroth that he grew mad, and he bent his bow, and laid an arrow on the string, and drew at Frithiof so mightily that the bow brake asunder in the midst.

But when Frithiof saw that, then he gat him to the two bow oars of Ellidi, and laid so hard on them that they both broke and with that he sang a stave:

Young Ingibiorg
Kissed I aforetime,
Kissed Beli's daughter
In Baldur's Meadow.
So shall the oars
Of Ellidi
Break both together
As Helgi's bow breaks.

Then the wind ran down the firth and they hoisted sail and sailed; but Frithiof bade them look to it that they might have no long abiding there. And so withal they sailed out of the Sognifirth, and Frithiof sang:

Sail we away from Sogni,
E'en as we sailed just now,
When flared the fire all over
The house that was my father's;
Now is the bale a-burning
Amidst of Baldur's Meadow:
But as a wolf I wend forth,
Well wot I they have sworn it.

'What shall we turn to now, foster-brother?' said Biorn.

'I may not abide here in Norway,' said Frithiof; 'I will learn the ways of warriors, and sail a-warring.'

So they searched the isles and out-skerries the summer long, and gathered thereby

riches and renown ; but in autumn-tide they made for the Orkneys, and Angantyr gave them good welcome, and they abode there through the winter-tide.

But when Frithiof was gone from Norway the kings held a Thing, whereat was Frithiof made an outlaw throughout their realm : they took his lands to them, moreover, and King Halfdan took up his abode at Framness, and built up again all Baldur's Meadow, though it was long ere the fire was slaked there. This misliked King Helgi most, that the gods were all burned up, and great was the cost or ever Baldur's Meadow was built anew fully equal to its first estate.

So King Helgi abode still at Syrstrand.

Chapter XI.

FRITHIOF GOES TO SEE KING RING AND INGIBIORG.

Frithiof waxed ever in riches and renown whithersoever he went: evil men he slew, and grimly strong-thieves, but peaceful folk and chapmen he let abide in peace; and now was he called anew Frithiof the Bold; he had gotten to him by now a great company well arrayed, and was become exceeding wealthy of chattels.

But when Frithiof had been three winters a-warring he sailed west, and made the Bay; then he said that he would go a-land: 'But ye shall fare a-warring without me this winter; for I begin to weary of warfare, and would fain go to the Uplands, and get speech of King Ring; but hither shall ye come to meet me in the summer, and I will be here the first day of summer.'

Biorn said: 'This counsel is nought wise, though thou must needs rule; rather would I that we fare north to Sogni, and slay both those kings, Helgi and Halfdan.'

'It is all one to me,' said Frithiof; 'I must needs go see King Ring and Ingibiorg.'

Says Biorn: 'Loth am I hereto that thou should'st risk thyself alone in his hands; for this Ring is a wise man and of great kin, though he be somewhat old.'

But Frithiof said he would have his own way: 'And thou, Biorn, shall be captain of our company meanwhile.'

So they did as he bade, and Frithiof fared to the Uplands in the autumn, for he desired sore to look upon the love of King Ring and Ingibiorg. But or ever he came there he did on him, over his clothes, a great cloak all shaggy; two staves he had in his hand, and a mask over his face, and he made as if he were exceeding old.

So he met certain herdsmen, and, going heavily, he asked them: 'Whence are ye?' they answered and said: 'We are of Streitaland, whereas the king dwelleth.'

Quoth the carle: 'Is King Ring a mighty king, then?'

They answered: 'Thou lookest old enough to know that he is mighty in all wise.' The carle said that he had heeded salt-boiling more than the ways of kings; and therewith he goes up to the king's house.

So when the day was well worn he came

into the hall, and looked about askance, and took an outward place, pulling his hood over him to hide his visage.

Then spake King Ring to Ingibiorg: 'There is come into the hall a man far bigger than other men.'

The queen answered: 'That is no such great tidings here.'

But the king spake to a serving-man who stood before the board, and said: 'Go thou, and ask yon cowled man who he is, whence he cometh, and what kin he is of.'

So the lad ran down the hall to the new-comer and said: 'What art thou called, thou man? Where wert thou last night? Of what kin art thou?'

Said the cowled man: 'Quick come thy questions, good fellow! but hast thou skill to understand if I shall tell thee hereof?'

'Yea, certes,' said the lad.

'Well,' said the cowl-bearer, 'Thief is my name, with Wolf was I last night, and in Sorrow-stead[1] was I reared.'

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[1] An untranslatable play of words, *angr* being an affix to certain Norwegian names, and meaning a bay or creek, as in Hardangr, &c., as well as grief, or sorrow.

Then ran the lad back to the king, and told him the answer of the new-comer.

'Well told, lad,' said the king, 'but for that stead of Sorrow, I know it well: it may well be that the man is of no light heart, and yet a wise man shall he be, and of great worth I account him.'

Said the queen: 'A marvellous fashion of thine, that thou must needs talk so freely with every carle that cometh hither! Yea, what is the worth of him, then?'

'That wottest thou no clearer than I,' said the king; 'but I see that he thinketh more than he talketh, and is peering all about him.'

Therewith the king sent a man after him, and so the cowl-bearer went up before the king, going somewhat bent, and greeted him in a low voice. Then said the king: 'What art thou called, thou big man?'

And the cowl-bearer answered and sang:

PEACE-THIEF[1] they called me
On the prow with the Vikings;
But WAR-THIEF whenas
I set widows a-weeping;

[1] Peace-thief is the literal translation of Frith-thiof.

SPEAR-THIEF when I
Sent forth the barbed shafts;
BATTLE-THIEF when I
Burst forth on the king;
ISLE-THIEF when I
In the outer isles harried;
SLAINS-THIEF when I
Sat aloft over men;
Yet since have I drifted
With salt-boiling carles,
Needy of help
Ere hither I came.

Said the king: 'Thou hast gotten thy name of Thief from many a matter, then; but where wert thou last night, and what is thy home?'

The cowl-bearer said: 'In Sorrow-stead was I reared; but Longing has driven me hither; nor have I any home.'

The king said: 'May be indeed that thou hast been nourished in Sorrow-stead a certain while; yet also may be that thou wert born in a place of peace. But in the wild wood must thou have lain last night, for no goodman dwelleth anigh named Wolf; but whereas thou sayest thou hast no home, so is it, that thou belike deemest thy home nought, because of the longing that drave thee hither.'

Then spake Ingibiorg: 'Go, Thief, get thee some other harbour than in our guest hall.'

'Nay,' said the king, 'I am old enow to know how to marshal guests; so do off thy cowl, new-comer, and sit down on my other hand.'

'Yea, old, and over old,' said the queen, 'when thou settest staff-carles by thy side.'

'Nay, lord, it beseemeth not,' said Thief; 'better it is as the queen sayeth. I have been more used to boiling salt than sitting beside lords.'

'Do thou my will,' said the king, 'for I will rule this time.'

So Thief cast his cowl from him, and was clad thereunder in a dark blue kirtle; on his arm, moreover, was the goodly gold ring, and a thick silver belt was round about him, with a great purse on it, and therein good store of silver pennies; a sword was girt to his side, and he had a great fur hood on his head, for his eyes were bleared, and his face all wrinkled.

'Ah! now we fare better, say I,' quoth the king; 'but do thou, queen, give him a goodly mantle, and be kind to him.'

'Thou shalt rule, my lord,' said the queen; 'but in small account do I hold this Thief of thine.'

So then he gat a good mantle over him, and sat down in the high seat beside the king. The queen waxed red as blood when she saw the goodly ring, yet would she give him never a word; but the king was exceeding blithe with him and said: 'A goodly ring hast thou on thy arm there; thou must have boiled salt long enough to get it.'

Says he, 'That is all my father left me.'

'Ah!' says the king, 'maybe thou hast more than that; well, few salt-boiling carles are thy peers, I deem, unless eld has been at work over fast with my eyes.'

So Thief was there through the winter mid good entertainment, and well accounted of by all men; he was bounteous of his wealth, and joyous with all men; the queen held but little converse with him; but the king and he were ever blithe together.

Chapter XII.

FRITHIOF SAVES THE KING AND QUEEN ON THE ICE.

The tale tells that on a time King Ring and the queen, and a great company, would go to a feast. So the king spoke to Thief: 'Wilt thou fare with us, or abide at home?'

He said he had liefer go; and the king said: 'Then am I the more content.'

So they went on their ways, and had to cross a certain frozen water; then said Thief: 'I deem this ice untrustworthy; meseems ye fare unwarily.'

Quoth the king: 'It is often shown what a good heart thou hast to us.'

So a little after the ice broke in beneath them, and Thief ran thereto, and dragged the sledge to him, with all that was therein; and the king and the queen both sat in the same: so Thief drew it all up on to the ice, with the horses that were yoked to the sledge. Then spake King Ring: 'Right well drawn, Thief! Frithiof the Bold himself would have drawn no stronger had he been here; doughty followers are such as thou!'

So they came to the feast, and there is nought to tell thereof, and the king went back again with seemly gifts.

Chapter XIII.

THE KING SLEEPS BEFORE FRITHIOF.

Now weareth away the mid-winter, and when spring cometh, the weather groweth fair, the wood bloometh, the grass groweth, and ships may glide betwixt land and land. So on a day the king says to his folk: 'I will that ye come with us for our disport out into the woods, that we may look upon the fairness of the earth.'

So did they, and went flock-meal with the king into the woods; but so it befell, that the king and Frithiof were gotten alone together afar from other men, and the king said he was heavy, and would fain sleep; then said Thief: 'Get thee home, then, lord, for it better beseemeth men of high estate to lie at home than abroad.'

'Nay,' said the king, 'so will I not do.' And he laid him down therewith, and slept fast, snoring loud.

Thief sat close by him, and presently drew his sword from his sheath and cast it far away from him.

A little while after the king woke up, and said: 'Was it not so, Frithiof, that a

many things came into thy mind e'en now? But well hast thou dealt with them, and great honour shalt thou have of me. Lo, now, I knew thee straightway that first evening thou camest into our hall: now nowise speedily shalt thou depart from us; and somewhat great abideth thee.'

Said Frithiof: 'Lord king, thou hast done to me well, and in friendly wise; but yet must I get me gone soon, because my company cometh speedily to meet me, as I have given them charge to do.'

So then they rode home from the wood, and the king's folk came flocking to him, and home they fared to the hall and drank joyously; and it was made known to all folk that Frithiof the Bold had been abiding there through the winter-tide.

Chapter XIV.

KING RING'S GIFT TO FRITHIOF.

Early of a morning-tide one smote on the door of that hall, wherein slept the king and queen, and many others: then the king asked who it was that called at the hall door; and so he who was without said: 'Here am I, Frithiof; and I am arrayed for my departure.'

Then was the door opened, and Frithiof came in, and sang a stave:

> Have great thanks for the guesting
> Thou gavest with all bounty;
> Dight fully for departure
> Is the eagles' feeder now;
> But, Ingibiorg, I mind thee
> While yet on earth I dwell;
> Live gloriously! I give thee
> This gift for many kisses.

And therewith he cast the goodly ring towards Ingibiorg, and bade her take it. The king smiled at this stave of his, and said: 'Yea, forsooth, she has more thanks for thy winter quarters than I; yet has she not been more friendly to thee than I.'

Then sent the king his serving-folk to fetch victuals and drink, and says that they

must eat and drink before Frithiof departed. 'So arise, queen, and be joyful!' But she said she was loth to fall a-feasting so early.

'Nay, we will eat all together,' said King Ring; and they did so.

But when they had drank a while King Ring spake: 'I would that thou abide here, Frithiof; for my sons are but children and I am old, and unmeet for the warding of my realm, if any should bring war against it.'

Frithiof said: 'Speedily must I be gone, lord.' And he sang:

Oh, live, King Ring,
Both long and hale!
The highest king
Neath heaven's skirt!
Ward well, O king,
Thy wife and land,
For Ingibiorg now
Never more shall I meet.

Then quoth King Ring:

Fare not away,
O Frithiof, thus,
With downcast heart
O dearest of chieftains!
For now will I give thee
For all thy good gifts,

Far better things
Than thou wottest thyself.

And again he sang:

To Frithiof the famous
My fair wife I give,
And all things therewith
That are unto me.

Then Frithiof took up the word and sang:

Nay, how may I
These good gifts have
But if thou hast fared
By the last way of fate?

The king said: 'I would not give this, but that I deem it will soon be so, for I sicken now, but of all men I would that thou shouldst have the joy of this; for thou art the crown of all Norway. The name of king will I give thee also; and all this, because Ingibiorg's brethren would begrudge thee any honour; and would be slower in getting thee a wife than I am.'

Said Frithiof: 'Have all thanks, lord, for thy goodwill beyond that I looked for! but I will have no higher dignity than to be called earl.'

Then King Ring gave Frithiof rule over all his realm in due wise, and the name of earl therewith; and Frithiof was to rule it until such time as the sons of King Ring were of age to rule their own realm. So King Ring lay sick a little while, and then died; and great mourning was made for him; then was there a mound cast over him, and much wealth laid therein, according to his bidding.

Thereafter Frithiof made a noble feast, whereunto his folk came; and thereat was drunken at one and the same time the heritage feast after King Ring, and the bridal of Frithiof and Ingibiorg.

After these things Frithiof abode in his realm, and was deemed therein a most noble man; he and Ingibiorg had many children.

Chapter XV.

FRITHIOF KING IN SOGNI.

Now those kings of Sogni, the brethren of Ingibiorg, heard these tidings, how that Frithiof had gotten a king's rule in Ringrealm, and had wedded Ingibiorg their sister; then says Helgi to Halfdan, his brother, that great shame it was, and dishonour to them, that a mere duke's son should have her to wife: and so therewith they gather together a mighty army, and go their ways therewith to Ringrealm, with the mind to slay Frithiof, and lay all his realm under them.

But when Frithiof was ware of this, he gathered folk, and spake to the queen moreover: 'War is come nigh to our realm; and now, in whatso wise I deal with it, fain am I that thy ways to me grow no colder.'

She said: 'In such wise have matters gone that I must needs let thee be the highest.'

Now was Biorn come from the east to help Frithiof; so they fared to the fight, and it befell, as ever erst, that Frithiof was the foremost in the strife: King Helgi and

he came to handy-blows, and there he slew King Helgi.

Then bade Frithiof raise up the Shield of Peace, and the battle was stayed; and therewith he cried to King Halfdan: 'Two choices are in thine hands now, either to submit thyself and thy realm to me, or else get thy bane like thy brother; for methinks my side is grown the mightier.'

So Halfdan chose to lay himself and his realm under Frithiof's sway; and so now Frithiof became ruler over the Sogni-folk, and Halfdan was to be duke in Sogni, while Frithiof ruled Ringrealm. So Frithiof had the title and dignity of king in Sogni from the time that he gave up Ringrealm to the sons of King Ring, and thereafter he won Hordaland also. He and Ingibiorg had two sons, called Gunnthiof and Hunthiof, men of might, both of them. AND SO HERE ENDETH THE STORY OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.

The Bibelot

"A true poet, one of a small band."
GEORGE MEREDITH.

I.

THE *great white highway of Literature, we cannot too often recall, becomes at times a veritable* via dolorosa *strewn with bones of pilgrims who, such is the tragic comedy of the artistic temperament, "went miserably astray in the twilight." To cite five modern instances only, the world of Letters has seen within two decades quick confusion come upon James Thomson,* "B.V.," *Ernest Dowson, Oscar Wilde, Simeon Solomon; last of all Francis Thompson who assuredly in name and fame was not least in this list of the brotherhood "of celestial vision."*

Francis Thompson, the son of a country doctor, was born in 1860 at Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, and died of tuberculosis in a London hospital on November 13, 1907, "at dawn—the dawn that was the death-hour in his poem Dream-Tryst." [1]

[1] *See articles by Mr. Wilfrid Meynell in the* Athenæum *for November 23, 1907 (Pp. 654-656),*

The pity of such a life is summed up in a single poignant line: "Twas but a piece of childhood thrown away." Well might this latest victim of unmerciful disaster have said in all sad sincerity:

"Farewell!
Nor grieve that I ere you to quiet rest have won,
Rather with me rejoice!"

II.

Turn to what "great verse" Francis Thompson has left "unto a little clan." His earliest book, from which six selections are made by us, was simply entitled Poems *(1893,) followed by* Sister-Songs: an Offering to Two Sisters, *(1895,) a final volume of more miscellaneous contents,* New Poems, *appearing in 1897. The seventh poem, a genuine* tour de force *on the death of Cecil Rhodes, so far as we are aware is here reprinted for the first time. In the capacity of reviewer and essayist a considerable body of prose remains scattered about in the* Academy *and* Athenæum *and*

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and Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in the Academy *under same date. It has been announced that Mr. Everard Meynell is engaged upon a life of Thompson, shortly to be issued. One of the sanest critical estimates of the poet is given in* Poets of the Younger Generation *by* William Archer, *(1902,) pp. 431-459.*

possibly a few other literary journals. A brief booklet entitled Health and Holiness *(1905,) would seem to complete the sum of Thompson's labors."* [1]

III.

If the first appraisers of Thompson's three books of song were not wholly disposed to accept Coventry Patmore's generous estimate[2] *of his work there is no lack to-day of voices crying aloud the merits of the dead master. Conceivably the poet might be made to suffer from the praises of a* coterie *whose critical judgment is of small consequence in any lasting audit. It is all very well intentioned but whatever personal affection may affirm one must dismiss* as a whole *such wondrous shot-rubbish as appals the reader in* Love in Dian's Lap *and in the perfervid dithyrambus called* Sister-Songs. *Something far other than these*

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[1] *Among uncollected poems there are two for October, 1895, and June, 1896, reprinted in* The Catholic World, *for February, 1908, which also contains a fine friendly appreciation by Father Gerrard who knew Thompson personally. An ode entitled* The Nineteenth Century *appeared in the* Academy *for December 29, 1900, and remains there. Since Thompson's death new editions of all his books have been published in London (John Lane & Company, New York).*

[2] *In the* Fortnightly Review *for January, 1894.*

fantastic fanfares of perverted poetizing must be sought and found if their writer's fame is to remain secure against assault. Nor does the Church stand in need of the use made by Thompson of its sacred symbols. In all this elaborate fustian there is apparent that blot in the brain which when urged a step further issues in an unintelligible welter of witless words! Not by such means was or is the battle won; not by violence like unto this is the Kingdom of Poesy established on earth or in Heaven.

On the other hand, if any doubt exists, when this superbly gifted poet is under fairly normal conditions and has the Muse within control, the seven poems chosen by us should settle it forever. Surely, if we seek for the lyric cry it is here. Take the poem called Daisy: *it has an atmosphere sought for in vain outside of Wordsworth and George Meredith. The three stanzas beginning "Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play," attest a clarity of utterance — of purest ray serene. The same can be truthfully said of* Dream-Tryst, To My Godchild, *and* The Poppy. *As for* The Hound of Heaven *and* To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster *they need no praise of ours; mystical they may be and are, but even so, even if alloy has been*

added to the virgin gold, it has been added simply that the work be done at all: especially true is this of the first named poem.

"There's one trick,
(Craftsmen instruct me) one approved device
And but one, fits such slivers of pure gold
As this was, — such mere oozings from the mine.
. . . . . .
But his work ended, once the thing a ring,
Oh, there's repristination! Just a spirt
O' the proper fiery acid o'er its face,
And forth the alloy unfastened flies in fume;
While, self-sufficient now, the shape remains,
The rondure brave, the lilied loveliness,
Gold as it was, is, shall be evermore."

IV.

It is inevitable, perhaps, that a diversity of opinion will remain when all is said fairly and freely — a perversity, rather, as some of Thompson's friends may urge — concerning a songsmith of such unique endowments. But poetry, if it is *great is not to be wrapped up in the cerements of any religion, Jewish or Gentile; to deliver its message to mankind it must come in its own divine right — naked and alone! It is not enough either, to affirm that Thompson possessed the cosmic vision. If he did, all we can say is that the cosmos revealed itself to him as through a glass darkly. One must perforce still ask: will verse of*

this esoteric aloofness ever become widely known and accepted of men? In view of the contumely which ofttimes confronts those who have *fallen upon the evil days of popularity we do not know that his admirers would even wish it. He was one of the world's wastrels, but "the general mist of error" which wrought such havoc in his life is at an end. It may even come to pass that Mr. George Meredith's testimony at the poet's graveside will serve as his epitaph and the world's estimate in one: "A true poet, one of a small band." To speak as Shelley spoke: "He has outsoared the shadow of our night," and "is secure, and now can never mourn."*

V.

At the risk of being charged with unduly exceeding our usual limits we shall devote a few words to Thompson's kinship with certain great Jacobean poets. For one thing he was a weaver of imperial purple. Take three brief passages like these:

"And all man's Babylons strive but to impart
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart."

"How many Ninevehs and Hecatompyloi,
And perished cities whose great phantasmata
O'erbrow the silent citizens of Dis."

"The fiery pomps, brave exhalations,
And all the glistering shows o' the seeming world,
Which the sight aches at, we unwinking see
Through the smoked glass of Death."

From Sister-Songs *the following lines read like a sestet out of a lost sonnet by Michelangelo:*

"Yea, ere Saturnian earth her child consumes,
And I lie down with outworn ossuaries,
Ere death's grim tongue anticipates the tomb's
Siste viator, *in this storied urn*
My living heart is laid to throb and burn,
Till end be ended, and till ceasing cease."

Now consider what the earlier poets had to say concerning Death:

" 'Tis of all sleeps the sweetest:
Children begin it to us, strong men seek it,
And kings from height of all their painted glory
Fall like spent exhalations to this centre."

" 'Tis less than to be born; a lasting sleep;
A quiet resting from all jealousy;
A thing we all pursue; I know, besides,
It is but giving over of a game
That must be lost."

"We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
Yea, cease to die, by dying."

With these funereal pomps let us compare the final lines in Thompson's An Anthem of Earth *and so take leave of him:*

"Now, mortal-sonlike,
I thou hast suckled, Mother, I at last
Shall sustenant be to thee. Here I untrammel,
Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off
The bur o' the world, man's congregations shun,
And to the antique order of the dead
I take the tongueless vows: my cell is set
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is anded
In a little peace."

FOR APRIL:
OBERMANN: AN ESSAY
AND TWO POEMS
BY MATTHEW ARNOLD.

SEVEN POEMS
By
FRANCIS THOMPSON.

Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play;
Go, children of swift joy and tardy sorrow:
And some are sung, and that was yesterday,
And some unsung, and that may be to-morrow.

Go forth; and if it be o'er stony way,
Old joy can lend what newer grief must borrow:
And it was sweet, and that was yesterday,
And sweet is sweet, though purchasèd with sorrow.

Go, songs, and come not back from your far way:
And if men ask you why ye smile and sorrow,
Tell them ye grieve, for your hearts know To-day,
Tell them ye smile, for your eyes know To-morrow.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.
(*Envoy to* New Poems, *1897.*)

"SLAIN by life, Francis Thompson is no more. He is now one with the noble company of poets of whom the world was not worthy. . . . I have said he was slain by life, and it is the simple truth, for life is coarse and clumsy when it touches a soul made of coloured mist and airy fire. . . . Francis Thompson was a spiritual exile. . . . He endured unimaginable squalors. . . . like De Quincey, he knew Oxford street for a stony-hearted stepmother. Like De Quincey, he wandered through the London streets by night and in one of his poems [see *Sister-Songs*, Part I, Section 8,] he hints at a story which recalls the romance of De Quincey and Ann. . . .

"Thompson's poetry is a 'wassail of orgiac imageries.' He is a poet's poet, like Shelley and Blake. In order to follow him as he soars from image to image and symbol to symbol, you must have the rare wings of imagination. His masterpiece, *The Hound of Heaven*, is molten white with the passion of the imaginative conscience, the anguish of the soul that flies before the dim vision of a pursuing God.

"This gift of dreadful vision is not found in Crashaw or in Patmore, in Donne or in Herbert, and therefore it seems to me that Thompson is essentially more akin to Blake, Coleridge and Rossetti than to the ecclesiastical mystics. He is a Twentieth Century mystic with a Sixteenth Century manner. His Latinisms, his neologisms, and his conceits are derivative: his gorgeous imagery is his own."

JAMES DOUGLAS.

A WORD ON FRANCIS THOMPSON.

THE news comes to me on a little black-edged card that Francis Thompson died at dawn on 13 November. He was a Roman Catholic, and we are asked to pray for his soul. It was a light that death could not put out, a torch that no wind could blow out in the darkness. From us indeed it is now turned away, and that little corner of the world to which the poet gives light is darkened.

For Francis Thompson was one of the few poets now or lately living in whom there was some trace of that divine essence which we best symbolise by fire. Emptinesses he had and extravagances, but he was a poet, and he had made of many influences a form of new beauty. Much of his speech, which has a heaped imagery unique in our time, seems to have learnt its technique from an almost indiscriminate quarrying among old quarries, and is sometimes so closely copied from that which was fantastically precise in Crashaw, Donne, Vaughan, that we wonder

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From *The Saturday Review* for November 23, 1907.

why it was not a few centuries ago that someone said:

> "Life is a coquetry
> Of Death, which wearies me,
> Too sure
> Of the amour;
>
> A tiring-room where I
> Death's divers garments try,
> Till fit
> Some fashion sit."

No one since that time, when "conceits" could convey poetical substance, has touched so daintily on plain words, giving by the touch some transfiguring novelty. If it was a style learnt, it was a style perfectly acquired, and at times equal to its original.

Words and cadences must have had an intoxication for him, the intoxication of the scholar; and "cloudy trophies" were continually falling into his hands, and half through them, in his hurry to seize and brandish them. He swung a rare incense in a censer of gold, under the vault of a chapel where he had hung votive offerings. The incense half obscures the offerings, and the dim figures of the saints painted on the windows.

As he bows there in the chapel he seems to himself to be in "reverberant Eden-ways" or higher, at the throne of heaven, borne on "plumes night-tinctured, englobed and cinctured of saints." Passing beyond the world he finds strange shapes, full of pomp and wearing strange crowns; but they are without outline, and his words disguise, decorate, but do not reveal them.

When he chanted in his chapel of dreams, the airs were often airs which he had learnt from Crashaw and from Patmore. They came to life again when he used them, and he made for himself a music which was part strangely familiar and part his own, almost bewilderingly. Such reed-notes and such orchestration of sound were heard nowhere else; and people listened to the music, entranced as by a new magic.

When he put these dreams and this music into verse, with a craft which he had perfected for his own use, the poetry was for the most part a splendid rhetoric, imaginative and passionless, as if the moods went by, wrapped in purple, in a great procession. "The Hound of Heaven" has the harmonies of a symphony, and there are delicacies

among its splendours, and, among instants of falsely fanciful sentiment, such august moments as this:

"I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again."

It is full of fine and significant symbolism, it is an elaborate pageant of his own life, with all its miseries, heights, relapses, and flight after some eternity; but, as he writes it, it turns intellectual, and the voice is like that of one declaiming his confession. It was not thus that Christina Rossetti let us overhear a few of the deepest secrets of her soul.

The genius of Francis Thompson was oriental, exuberant in colour, woven into elaborate patterns, and went draped in old silken robes, that had survived many dynasties. The spectacle of him was an enchantment; he passed like a wild vagabond of the mind, dazzling our sight. He had no message, but he dropt sentences by the way, cries of joy or pity, love of children, worship of the Virgin and Saints and of those who

were patron saints to him on earth; his voice was heard like a wandering music, which no one heeded for what it said, in a strange tongue, but which came troublingly into the mind, bringing it the solace of its old, recaptured melodies. Other poets of his time have had deeper things to say, and a more flawless beauty; others have put more of their hearts into their song; but no one has been a torch waved with so fitful a splendour over the gulfs of our darkness.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN.

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.

Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their changèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden — to eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet: —
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat —
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that, after which I strayed,
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one —
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with — made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine —
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak —
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace
Deliberate speed majestic instancy

And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again;
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?
Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

"Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited —
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

TO THE DEAD CARDINAL OF WESTMINSTER.

I WILL not perturbate
Thy Paradisal state
With praise
Of thy dead days;

To the new-heavened say,—
"Spirit, thou wert fine clay:"
This do,
Thy praise who knew.

Therefore my spirit clings
Heaven's porter by the wings,
And holds
Its gated golds

Apart, with thee to press
A private business;—
Whence,
Deign me audience.

Anchorite, who didst dwell
With all the world for cell!
My soul
Round me doth roll

A sequestration bare.
Too far alike we were,
Too far
Dissimilar.

For its burning fruitage I
Do climb the tree o' the sky;
Do prize
Some human eyes.

You smelt the Heaven-blossoms,
And all the sweets embosoms
The dear
Uranian year.

Those Eyes my weak gaze shuns,
Which to the suns are Suns,
Did
Not affray your lid.

The carpet was let down
(With golden moultings strown)
For you
Of the angels' blue.

But I, ex-Paradised,
The shoulder of your Christ
Find high
To lean thereby.

So flaps my helpless sail,
Bellying with neither gale,
Of Heaven
Nor Orcus even.

Life is a coquetry
Of Death, which wearies me,
Too sure
Of the amour;

A tiring-room where I
Death's divers garments try,
Till fit
Some fashion sit.

It seemeth me too much
I do rehearse for such
A mean
And single scene.

The sandy glass hence bear—
Antique remembrancer;
My veins
Do spare its pains.

With secret sympathy
My thoughts repeat in me
Infirm
The turn o' the worm

Beneath my appointed sod;
The grave is in my blood;
I shake
To winds that take

Its grasses by the top;
The rains thereon that drop
Perturb
With drip acerb

My subtly answering soul;
The feet across its knoll
Do jar
Me from afar.

As sap foretastes the spring;
As Earth ere blossoming
Thrills
With far daffodils,

And feels her breast turn sweet
With the unconceivèd wheat;
So doth
My flesh foreloathe

The abhorrèd spring of Dis,
With seething presciences
Affirm
The preparate worm.

I have no thought that I,
When at the last I die,
Shall reach
To gain your speech.

But you, should that be so,
May very well, I know,
May well
To me in hell

With recognising eyes
Look from your Paradise —
"God bless
Thy hopelessness!"

Call, holy soul, O call
The hosts angelical,
And say, —
"See, far away

"Lies one I saw on earth;
One stricken from his birth
With curse
Of destinate verse.

"What place doth He ye serve
For such sad spirit reserve, —
Given,
In dark lieu of Heaven,

"The impitiable Dæmon,
Beauty, to adore and dream on,
To be
Perpetually

"Hers, but she never his?
He reapeth miseries,
Foreknows
His wages woes;

"He lives detachèd days;
He serveth not for praise;
For gold
He is not sold;

"Deaf is he to world's tongue;
He scorneth for his song
The loud
Shouts of the crowd;

"He asketh not world's eyes;
Not to world's ears he cries;
Saith, — 'These
Shut, if ye please;'

"He measureth world's pleasure,
World's ease as Saints might measure;
For hire
Just love entire

"He asks, not grudging pain;
And knows his asking vain,
And cries —
'Love! Love!' and dies;

"In guerdon of long duty,
Unowned by Love or Beauty;
And goes —
Tell, tell, who knows!

"Aliens from Heaven's worth,
Fine beasts who nose i' the earth,
Do there
Reward prepare.

"But are *his* great desires
Food but for nether fires?
Ah me,
A mystery!

"Can it be his alone,
To find when all is known,
That what
He solely sought

"Is lost, and thereto lost
All that its seeking cost?
That he
Must finally,

"Through sacrificial tears,
And anchoretic years,
Tryst
With the sensualist?"

So ask; and if they tell
The secret terrible,
Good friend,
I pray thee send

Some high gold embassage
To teach my unripe age.
Tell!
Lest my feet walk hell.

DREAM-TRYST.

THE breaths of kissing night and day
Were mingled in the eastern Heaven:
Throbbing with unheard melody
Shook Lyra all its star-chord seven:
When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy,
And dawn's grey eyes were troubled grey;
And souls went palely up the sky,
And mine to Lucidé.

There was no change in her sweet eyes
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine;
There was no change in her deep heart
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.
Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,
Wherein did ever come and go
The sparkle of the fountain-drops
From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams
Are fed with so divine an air,
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,
And they who walk there are most fair.
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,
Who with the Past meet girt about:
Where our last kiss still warms the air,
Nor can her eyes go out.

TO MY GODCHILD,

FRANCIS M. W. M.

THIS labouring, vast, Tellurian galleon,
Riding at anchor off the orient sun,
Had broken its cable, and stood out to space
Down some frore Arctic of the aërial ways:
And now, back warping from the inclement main,
Its vaporous shroudage drenched with icy rain,
It swung into its azure roads again;
When, floated on the prosperous sun-gale, you
Lit, a white halcyon auspice, 'mid our frozen crew.

To the Sun, stranger, surely you belong,
Giver of golden days and golden song;
Nor is it by an all-unhappy plan
You bear the name of me, his constant Magian.
Yet ah! from any other that it came,
Lest fated to my fate you be, as to my name.
When at the first those tidings did they bring,
My heart turned troubled at the ominous thing:
Though well may such a title him endower,
For whom a poet's prayer implores a poet's power.
The Assisian, who kept plighted faith to three,
To Song, to Sanctitude, and Poverty,
(In two alone of whom most singers prove
A fatal faithfulness of during love!);

He the sweet Sales, of whom we scarcely ken
How God he could love more, he so loved men;
The crown and crowned of Laura and Italy;
And Fletcher's fellow — from these, and not from me,
Take you your name, and take your legacy!

Or, if a right successive you declare
When worms, for ivies, intertwine my hair,
Take but this Poesy that now followeth
My clayey hest with sullen servile breath,
Made then your happy freedman by testating death.
My song I do but hold for you in trust,
I ask you but to blossom from my dust.
When you have compassed all weak I began,
Diviner poet, and ah! diviner man;
The man at feud with the perduring child
In you before song's altar nobly reconciled;
From the wise heavens I half shall smile to see
How little a world, which owned you, needed me.
If, while you keep the vigils of the night,
For your wild tears make darkness all too bright,
Some lone orb through your lonely window peeps,
As it played lover over your sweet sleeps;
Think it a golden crevice in the sky,
Which I have pierced but to behold you by!

And when, immortal mortal, droops your head,
And you, the child of deathless song, are dead;

Then, as you search with unaccustomed glance
The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,
Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod
Among the bearded counsellors of God;
For if in Eden as on earth are we,
I sure shall keep a younger company:
Pass where beneath their rangèd gonfalons
The starry cohorts shake their shielded suns,
The dreadful mass of their enridgèd spears;
Pass where majestical the eternal peers,
The stately choice of the great Saintdom, meet—
A silvern segregation, globed complete
In sandalled shadow of the Triune feet;
Pass by where wait, young poet-wayfarer,
Your cousined clusters, emulous to share
With you the roseal lightnings burning 'mid their hair;
Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven:—
Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven.

DAISY.

WHERE the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill —
O the breath of the distant surf! —

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And, with the sea-breeze hand in hand,
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day!

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face!
She gave me tokens three:—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word,—strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end:
Their scent survives their close,
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose!

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
  She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
  And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
  Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
  The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
  Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
  And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
  That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in others' pain,
  And perish in our own.

THE POPPY.

TO MONICA.

SUMMER set lip to earth's bosom bare,
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth red like a lion's it drank
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,
And dipped its cup in the purpurate shine
When the eastern conduits ran with wine.

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,
And hot as a swinked gipsy is,
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gipsy there;
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,
With — "Keep it, long as you live!" — to him.

And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,
Trembled up from a bath of tears;
And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,
Tossed on the wave of his troubled heart.

For *he* saw what she did not see,
That — as kindled by its own fervency —
The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly:

And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years —
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.

"Was never such thing until this hour,"
Low to his heart he said; "the flower
Of sleep brings wakening to me,
And of oblivion memory."

"Was never this thing to me," he said,
"Though with bruisèd poppies my feet are red!"
And again to his own heart very low:
"O child! I love, for I love and know;

"But you, who love nor know at all
The diverse chambers in Love's guest-hall,
Where some rise early, few sit long:
In how differing accents hear the throng
His great Pentecostal tongue;

"Who know not love from amity,
Nor my reported self from me;
A fair fit gift is this, meseems,
You give — this withering flower of dreams.

"O frankly fickle, and fickly true,
Do you know what the days will do to you?
To your Love and you what the days will do,
O frankly fickle, and fickly true?

"You have loved me, Fair, three lives — or days:
'Twill pass with the passing of my face.
But where *I* go, your face goes too,
To watch lest I play false to you.

"I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another;
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

"So, frankly fickle, and fickly true!
For my brief life-while I take from you
This token, fair and fit, meseems,
For me — this withering flower of dreams."

* * * * * *

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper!

Love! love! your flower of withered dream
In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love! *I* fall into the claws of Time:
But lasts within a leavèd rhyme
All that the world of me esteems—
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

CECIL RHODES.[1]

DIED MARCH 26, 1902.

THEY that mis-said
This man yet living, praise him dead.
And I too praise, yet not the baser things
Wherewith the market and the tavern rings.
Not that high things for gold,
He held, were bought and sold,
That statecraft's means approved are by the end;
Not for all which commands
The loud world's clapping hands,
To which cheap press and cheaper patriots bend;
But for the dreams,
For those impossible gleams
He half made possible; for that he was
Visioner of vision in a most sordid day:
This draws
Back to me song long alien and astray.

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1 "Once or twice in those seven years of our intercourse a flame of his old poetic fire blazed out, and once I was able to divert the flame into the pages of *The Academy*. When Cecil Rhodes died — that great dreamer and great man of action — I telegraphed to Thompson to hasten to the office. That was on a Monday. He appeared on the Tuesday. I asked him point blank if he would write an ode on Cecil Rhodes for the next issue of the paper, and without waiting

In dreams what did he not,
Wider than his wide deeds? In dreams he wrought
What the old world's long livers must in act forego.
From the Zambesi to the Limpopo
He the many-languaged land
Took with his large compacting hand
And pressed into a nation: 'thwart the accurst
And lion-'larumed ways,
Where the lean-fingered Thirst
Wrings at the throat, and Famine strips the bone;
A tawny land, with sun at sullen gaze,

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for his refusal talked Rhodes to him for half an hour, roused his enthusiasm, and he departed with a half promise to deliver the ode on Thursday morning. Thursday came and nearly passed. I sent him three telegrams, but received no answer. It was necessary to go to press at eight o'clock. At half past six he arrived, and proceeded to extract from his pockets a dozen and more scraps of crumpled paper, each containing a fragment of the ode. I pieced them together, sent the blurred manuscript to the printers, gave him money for his dinner, and exacted a promise that he would return in an hour to read the proof. He returned dazed and incoherent, read the proof standing and swaying as he read, and murmured: 'It's all right.' It was all right. I am prouder of having published that ode than of anything else that *The Academy* ever contained."—C. Lewis Hind (former editor of the London *Academy*), in *Harper's Weekly*, January 18, 1908. The ode appeared in *The Academy*, April 12, 1902.

And all above a cope of heated stone;
He heard the shirted miner's rough halloo
Call up the mosquèd Cairene; harkened clear
The Cairene's far-off summons sounding through
The sea's long noises to the Capeman's ear.

He saw the Teuton and the Saxon grip
Hands round the warded world, and bid it rock,
While they did watch its cradle. Like a ship
It swung, whileas the cabined inmates slept,
Secure their peace was kept,
Such arms of warranty about them lock.
Ophir[1] he saw, her long-ungazed-at gold,
Stirred from its deep.
And often-centuried sleep,
Wink at the new Sun in an English hold.
England, from Afric's swarthy loins
Drawing fecundity,
Wax to the South and North,
To East and West increase her puissant goings-forth,
And strike young emperies, like coins,
In her own regent effigy.
He saw the three-branched Teuton hold the sides
Of the round world, and part it as a dish
Whereof to each his wish
The amity of the full feast decides.

[1] Rhodesia, according to some modern views.

So large his dreams, so little come to act!
Who must call on the cannon to compact
The hard Dutch-stubborned land,
Seditious even to such a potent hand.
Who grasped and held his Ophir: held, no less,
The Northern ways, but never lived to see
The wing-foot messages
Dart from the Delta to the Southern Sea.
Who, confident of gold,
A leaner on the statesman's arts
And the unmartial conquests of the marts,
Died with the sound of battle round him rolled,
And rumour of battle in all nations' hearts.
Dying, saw his life a thing
Of large beginnings; and for young
Hands yet untrained the harvesting,
Amid the iniquitous years if harvest sprung.
So in his death he sowed himself anew;
Cast his intents over the grave to strike
In the left world of livers living roots,
And banyan-like,
From his one tree raise up a wood of shoots.
The indestructible intents which drew
Their sap from him,
Thus, with a purpose grim,
Into strange lands and hostile yet he threw,
That there might be
From him throughout the earth posterity:

And so did he —
Like to a smouldering fire by wind-blasts swirled —
His dying embers strew to kindle all the world.

Yet not for this I praise
The ending of his strenuous days;
No, not alone that still
Beyond the grave stretched that imperial Will.
But that Death seems
To set the gateway wide to ampler dreams;
Yea, yet he dreams upon Matoppo hill,
The while the German and the Saxon see,
And seeing, wonder,
The spacious dreams take shape and be,
As at compulsion of his sleep thereunder.
Lo, young America at the Mother's knee,
Unlearning centuried hate,
For love's more blest extreme;
And this is in his dream,
And sure the dream is great.
Lo, Colonies on Colonies,
The furred Canadian and the digger's shirt,
To the one Mother's skirt
Cling, in the lore of Empire to be wise;
A hundred wheels a-turn
All to one end — that England's sons may learn
The glory of their sonship, the supreme
Worth that befits the heirs of such estate.

All these are in his dream,
And sure the dream is great.

So, to the last
A visionary vast,
The aspirant soul would have the body lie
Among the hills immovably exalt
As he above the crowd that haste and halt,
"Upon that hill which I
Called 'View of All the World;'" to show thereby
That still his unappeasable desires
Beneath his feet surveyed the peoples and empires.
Dreams, haply of scant worth,
Bound by our little thumb-ring of an earth;
Yet an exalted thing
By the gross search for food and raimenting.
So in his own Matoppos, high, aloof,
The elements for roof,
Claiming his mountain kindred, and secure,
Within that sepulture
Stern like himself and unadorned,
From the loud multitude he ruled and scorned,
There let him cease from breath, —
Alone in crowded life, not lonelier in death.

The Bibelot

JUST why Matthew Arnold never reprinted the article he contributed to the first number of The Academy,[1] *for October 9, 1869, is difficult to say. It is possible that he considered his two poems on* Obermann, *especially with the lengthy note appended to the earlier tribute, as sufficient in themselves. None the less we believe this essay well worth rescuing from such seldom seen pages, containing as it does a round dozen of translated passages which are indubitably on the same high level of excellence and distinction informing what Arnold did in similar guise for Joubert, George Sand, Amiel and Maurice de Guérin.*

The almost forgotten man of genius who desired and who had for his epitaph, Eternité, deviens mon asile, *was of all men the most likely to attract and to hold the attention of the author of* Thyrsis, *who in turn was the one Englishman then living or since, supremely fitted and fulfilled by nature to do his subject absolute poetic justice.*

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1 The Academy *was originally issued by John Murray as a montbly. It still exists, as a weekly, with Lord Alfred Douglas as its latest editor.*

Within recent years we have seen two very indispensable works dealing with Senancour and these, for some time to come, doubtless contain about all the limited public who care for Obermann *will be likely to require.*[1] *"It is the poet in Matthew Arnold," according to Miss Frothingham, "that claims 'fellowship in mood' and sympathy with the poet in Senancour. This may explain why he has not given of him one of his delightful critical portraits. The affinity is too close, the influence too subtle to be brought within the limits of analysis." Which remark is all*

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1 Obermann: Selections from Letters to a Friend by Etienne Pivert de Senancour. Chosen and translated with an Introductory Essay and Notes by Jessie Peabody Frothingham, Translator of the Journal of Maurice de Guérin. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1901. *Octavo, 2 vols. 300 copies only issued.*

Obermann by Etienne Pivert de Senancour with Biographical and Critical Introduction by Arthur Edward Waite. London, 1903. *Crown 8vo. Pp. lxxxiv: 1–424.*

See Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature: I. The Emigrant Literature. By George Brandes. New York, 1906. *Pp. 43–55. One feels like asking "what crime did these writers commit that they should be so impounded." It is bookmaking of a grossly commercialized type whereof 200 pages comprise a single volume equal in bulk to 400 pages of the same firm's* de luxe *Arnold.*

very well, but chiefly shows that its writer had not seen the essay we here reprint. Indeed, neither Miss Frothingham nor Mr. Waite appear to have known of the Academy *article, nor does the latter refer to the former's* Selections *but is content to say:* "*Senancour is known and admired in Sweden, Holland, and,* it is said, *in the United States of America.*" *As for Arnold his two poems present Senancour* "*at second-hand in a kind of transfigured aspect,*" *but* "*he also had next to nothing to tell us, either in the poems . . . or in the long note appended to one of them,*" *which* "*contains an appreciation,*" *though it is* "*the briefest but most suggestive of them all.*"

As to the value of Mr. Waite's introduction, however, there can be but one opinion: it certainly supplies a long felt want and, taken with his complete version of the text, should not ultimately fail of reaching many readers in America. Unquestionably as a discover Arnold ranks first, and, from the poetic viewpoint, remains first in the field of letters. Both the Stanzas *and* Obermann Once More *stand at the head of his shorter elegiac poems, and there are not wanting those of us who place them in the immediate vicinage of* The Scholar Gipsy *or even beside the*

greatest of all, that masterpiece of matchless melody — Thyrsis.

In "some last words of Goethe's own," elsewhere cited by Arnold, Senancour might seem to have found his soul's deepest utterance: The fashion of this world passeth away; and I would fain occupy myself only with the abiding.

FOR MAY:

THREE POETS OF FRENCH BOHEMIA
BY ANDREW LANG.

OBERMANN: AN ESSAY AND TWO POEMS

By

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

OBERMANN *is a note-book or ordinal of a soul-errant on its way unguided through the world of life and time, but, amidst all darkness, wavering, circumambulation and unrest, still looking only towards eternity, and in that darkness and in that doubt realistically conscious of the Infinite.*

It was the consciousness of the soul, of the things which are not seen and eternal, of God and our part in God and immortality, which brought Senancour to the enjoyment of a certain measure of the light which has come upon the souls of a growing concourse of persons in the present day, is transforming thought and must ultimately transform life, and though in a certain sense the fullest experience of this light is almost necessarily reserved for a few, it is also destined to influence very largely the age and the world at large.

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE.

The author of *Obermann*, Etienne Pivert de Senancour, has little celebrity in France, his own country; and out of France he is almost unknown. But the profound inwardness, the austere sincerity, of his principal work, *Obermann*, the delicate feeling for nature which it exhibits, and the melancholy eloquence of many passages of it, have attracted and charmed some of the most remarkable spirits of this century, such as George Sand and Sainte-Beuve, and will probably always find a certain number of spirits whom they touch and interest. . . .

The influence of Rousseau, and certain affinities with more famous and fortunate authors of his own day,—Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël,—are everywhere visible in Senancour. But though, like these eminent personages, he may be called a sentimental writer, and though *Obermann*, a collection of letters from Switzerland treating almost entirely of nature and of the human soul, may be called a work of sentiment, Senancour has a gravity and severity which distinguish him from all other writers of the sentimental school. The world is with him in his solitude far less than it is with them; of all writers he is the most perfectly isolated and the least attitudinising. His chief work, too, has a value and power of its own, apart from these merits of its author. The stir of all the main forces, by which modern life is and has been impelled, lives in the letters of *Obermann;* the dissolving agencies of the eighteenth century, the fiery storm of the French Revolution, the first faint promise and dawn of that new world which our own time is but now more fully bringing to light,—all these are to be felt, almost to be touched, there. To me, indeed, it will always seem that the impressiveness of this production can hardly be rated too high.

Besides *Obermann* there is one other of Senancour's works which, for those spirits who feel his attraction, is very interesting; its title is, *Libres Méditations d'un Solitaire Inconnu.*

OBERMANN.[1]

THE most recent edition of *Obermann* lies before me, the date on its title-page being 1863. It is, I believe, the fourth edition which has been published; the book made its first appearance in 1804; three editions, and not large editions, have sufficed for the demand of sixty years. Yet the book has lived, though with but this obscure life, and is not likely to die. Madame George Sand and Monsieur Sainte-Beuve have spoken in prose much and excellently of the book and its author. It may be in the recollection of some who read this that I have spoken of *Obermann* in verse, if not well, at least abundantly. It is to be wished, however, that Obermann should also speak to English readers for himself; and my present design is to take those two or three points where he is most significant and interesting, and to present some of his deliverances on those points in his own words.

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1 OBERMANN.—Par de Senancour. Nouvelle édition, revue et corrigée avec une Préface, par George Sand. Charpentier, Paris, 1863.

It may be convenient, however, that first I should repeat here the short sketch which I have already given elsewhere of the uneventful life of the personage whom we call Obermann. His real name is Senancour. In the book which occupies us, — a volume of letters of which the writer, calling himself Obermann, and writing chiefly from Switzerland, delivers his thoughts about God, nature, and the human soul, — it is Senancour himself who speaks under Obermann's name. Etienne Pivert de Senancour, a Frenchman, although having in his nature much that we are accustomed to consider as by no means French, was born in 1770, was trained for the priesthood, and passed some time in the seminary of St. Sulpice, broke away from his training and country to live some years in Switzerland, where he married, came back to France in middle life, and followed thenceforward the career of a man of letters, but with hardly any fame or success. His marriage was not a happy one. He died an old man in 1846, desiring that on his grave might be placed these words only: "*Eternité, deviens mon asile.*"

Of the letters of Obermann, the writer's profound inwardness, his austere and sad sincerity, and his delicate feeling for nature, are, as I have elsewhere remarked, the distinguishing characteristics. His constant inwardness, his unremitting occupation with that question which haunted St. Bernard — *Bernarde, ad quid venisti?* — distinguish him from Goethe and Wordsworth, whose study of this question is relieved by the thousand distractions of a poetic interest in nature and in man. His severe sincerity distinguishes him from Rousseau, Chateaubriand, or Byron, who in their dealing with this question are so often attitudinising and thinking of the effect of what they say on the public. His exquisite feeling for nature, though always dominated by his inward self-converse and by his melancholy, yet distinguishes him from the men simply absorbed in philosophical or religious concerns, and places him in the rank of men of poetry and imagination. Let me try to show these three main characteristics of Senancour from his own words.

A Frenchman, coming immediately after the eighteenth century and the French

Revolution, too clear-headed and austere for any such sentimental Catholic reaction as that with which Chateaubriand cheated himself, and yet, from the very profoundness and meditativeness of his nature, religious, Senancour felt to the uttermost the bare and bleak spiritual atmosphere into which he was born. Neither to a German nor to an Englishman, perhaps, would such a sense of absolute religious denudation have then been possible, or such a plainness and even crudity, therefore, in their way of speaking of it. Only to a Frenchman were these possible; but amid wars, bustle, and the glory of the *grande nation* few Frenchmen had meditativeness and seriousness enough for them. Senancour was of a character to feel his spiritual position, to feel it without dream or illusion, and to feel, also, that in the absence of any real inward basis life was weariness and vanity, and the ordinary considerations so confidently urged to induce a man to master himself and to be busy in it, quite hollow.

"People keep talking," says he, "of doing with energy that which ought to be done;

but, amidst all this parade of firmness, *tell me, then, what it is that ought to be done.* For my part I do not know; and I venture to suspect that a good many others are in the same state of ignorance."

He was born with a passion for order and harmony, and a belief in them; his being so utterly divested of all conventional beliefs, makes this single elementary belief of his the more weighty and impressive.

"May we not say that the tendency to order forms an essential part of our propensities, our *instinct*, just like the tendency to self-preservation, or to the reproduction of the species? Is it nothing, to live with the calm and the security of the just?"

And therefore, he concludes, "inasmuch as man had this feeling of order planted in him, inasmuch as it was in his nature, the right course would have been to try and make every individual man sensible of it and obedient to it." But what has been done? Since the beginning of the world, instead of having recourse to this innate

feeling, the guides of mankind have uniformly sought to control human conduct by means of supernatural hopes, supernatural terrors, thus misleading man's intelligence, and debasing his soul. "*Depuis trente siècles, les résultats sont dignes de la sagesse des moyens.*" What are called *the virtues*, "are laws of nature as necessary to man as the laws of his bodily senses." Instead of teaching men to feel this, instead of developing in them that sentiment of order and that consciousness of the divine which are the native possession of our race, Paganism and Christianity alike have tampered with man's mind and heart, and wrought confusion in them.

"Conquerors, slaves, poets, pagan priests, and nurses, succeeded in disfiguring the traditions of primitive wisdom by dint of mixing races, destroying memorials, explaining allegories and making nonsense of them, abandoning the profound and true meaning in order to discover in them absurd ideas which might inspire wonder and awe, and personifying abstract beings in order to have plenty of objects of worship. The principle

of life — that which was intelligence, light, the eternal — became nothing more than the husband of Juno; harmony, fruitfulness, the bond of all living things, became nothing more than the mistress of Adonis; imperishable wisdom came to be distinguished only through her owl; the great ideas of immortality and retribution consisted in the fear of turning a wheel, and the hope of strolling in a green wood. The indivisible divinity was parcelled into a hierarchical multitude torn by miserable passions; the fruit of the genius of primitive mankind, the emblems of the laws of the universe, had degenerated into superstitious usages which the children in great cities turned into ridicule."

Paul at Athens might have set forth, in words not unlike these, the degradation of the Unknown God; now for the religion of which Paul was a minister: —

"A moral belief was wanted, because pure morality was gone out of men's knowledge; dogmas were wanted, which should be profound and perhaps unfathomable, but

not by any means dogmas which should be absurd, because intelligence was spreading more and more. All religions being sunk into degradation, there was needed a religion of majesty, and answering to man's effort to elevate his soul by the idea of a God of all things. There were needed religious rites which should be imposing, not too common, objects of desire, mysterious yet simple; rites which seemed to belong to a higher world, and which yet a man's reason should accept as naturally as his heart. There was needed, in short, what only a great genius could institute, and what I can only catch glimpses of.

"But you have fabricated, patched, experimented, altered; renewed I know not what incoherent multitude of trivial ceremonies and dogmas, more fitted to scandalize the weak than to edify them. This dubious mixture you have joined to a morality sometimes false, often exceedingly noble, and almost always austere; the one single point in which you have shown sagacity. You pass some hundreds of years in arranging all this by inspiration; and your slowly built work, industriously repaired, but with

a radical fault in plan, is so made as to last hardly longer than the time during which you have been accomplishing it."

There is a passage to be meditated by the new Œcumenical Council! Not that Senancour has a trace of the Voltairian bitterness against Christianity, or against Catholicism which to him represented Christianity:—

"So far am I from having any prejudice against Christianity, that I deplore, I may say, what the majority of its zealous adherents never themselves think of deploring. I could willingly join them in lamenting the loss of Christianity; but there is this difference between us, that they regret it in the form into which it settled, nay, in the form, even, which it wore a century ago; whereas I cannot consider such a Christianity as that was to be much worthy of regret."

He owns that religion has done much; but, "si la religion a fait des grandes choses, *c'est avec des moyens immenses*." Disposing of such means, it ought to have done much more. Remark, he says, that for the educated class religion is one of the weakest of

the motive-powers they live by; and then ask yourself whether it is not absurd that there should be only a tenth part of our race educated. That religion should be of use as some restraint to the ignorant and brutal mass of mankind, shows, he thinks, not so much the beneficence of religion as the state of utter confusion and misery into which mankind has, in spite of religion, drifted: —

"I admit that the laws of civil society prove to be not restraint enough for this multitude to which we give no training, about which we never trouble our heads, which we bring into the world and then leave to the chance of ignorant passions and of habits of low debauchery. This only proves that there is mere wretchedness and confusion under the apparent calm of vast states; that the science of politics, in the true sense of the term, is a stranger to our world, where diplomacy and financial administration produce prosperity to be sung in poems, and win victories to figure in gazettes."

This concern for the state and prospects of what are called the masses is perpetually

recurring with Senancour; it came to him from his singular lucidity and plain-dealing, for it was no commonplace with his time and contemporaries, as it is with ours. "There are men," he says, and he was one of them, "who cannot be happy except among men who are contented; who feel in their own persons all the enjoyment and suffering they witness, and who cannot be satisfied with themselves except they contribute to the order of the world and to man's welfare." "Arrange one's life how one will," he says in another place, "who can answer for its being any happier, so long as it is and must be *sans accord avec les choses, et passée au milieu des peuples souffrans?*" This feeling returns again and again:—

"Inequality is in the nature of things; but you have increased it out of all measure, when you ought, on the contrary, to have studied to reduce it. The prodigies of your industry must surely be a baneful work of superfluity, if you have neither time nor faculties for doing so many things which are indispensable. The mass of mankind is brutal, foolish, given over to its passions;

all your ills come from this cause. Either do not bring men into existence, or, if you do, give them an existence which is human."

But as deep as his sense that the time was out of joint, was the feeling of this Hamlet that he had no power to set it right. *Vos douleurs ont flétri mon âme*, he says: —

"Your miseries have worn out my soul; they are intolerable, because they are objectless. Your pleasures are illusory, fugitive; a day suffices for knowing them and abandoning them. I enquired of myself for happiness, but with my eyes open; I saw that it was not made for the man who was isolated: I proposed it to those who stood round me; they had not leisure to concern themselves with it. I asked the multitude in its wear and tear of misery, and the great of earth under their load of ennui; they answered me: We are wretched to-day, but we shall enjoy ourselves to-morrow. For my part, I know that the day which is coming will only tread in the footsteps of the day which is gone before."

But a root of failure, powerlessness, and ennui, there certainly was in the constitution

of Senancour's own nature; so that, unfavourable as may have been his time, we should err in attributing to any outward circumstances the whole of the discouragement by which he is pervaded. He himself knew this well, and he never seeks to hide it from us. "Il y a dans moi un dérangement," says he; "*c'est le désordre des ennuis*."

"I was born to be not happy. You know those dark days, bordering on the frosts of winter, when mists hang heavily about the very dawn, and day begins only by threatening lines of a lurid light upon the masses of cloud. That glooming veil, those stormy squalls, those uncertain gleams, that whistling of the wind through trees which bend and shiver, those prolonged throes like funeral groans — you see in them the morning of life; at noon, cooler storms and more steadily persistent; at evening, thicker darkness still, and the day of man is brought to an end."

No representation of Senancour can, however, be complete without some of the gleams which relieved this discouragement.

Besides the inwardness, besides the sincerity, besides the renouncement, there was the poetic emotion and the deep feeling for nature.

"And I, too, I have my moments of forgetfulness, of strength, of grandeur; I have desires and yearnings that know no limit. But I behold the monuments of effaced generations; I see the flint wrought by the hand of man, and which will subsist a hundred centuries after him. I renounce the care for that which passes away, and the thought of a present which is already gone. I stand still, and marvel; I listen to what subsists yet, I would fain hear what will go on subsisting; in the movement of the forest, in the murmur of the pines, I seek to catch some of the accents of the eternal tongue."

Nature, and the emotion caused by nature, inspire so many beautiful passages in Obermann's letters that one is embarrassed to make a choice among them. The following, with which we will end our extracts, is a morning and night-piece from the north end

of the Lake of Neufchâtel, where the river Thiele enters the lake from Bienne, between Saint Blaise and Morat:—

"My window had remained open all night, as is my habit. Towards four o'clock in the morning I was wakened by the dawn, and by the scent of the hay which they had been cutting in the cool early hours by the light of the moon. I expected an ordinary view; but I had a moment of perfect astonishment. The midsummer rains had kept up the waters which the melting snow in the Jura had previously swollen. The space between the lake and the Thiele was almost entirely flooded; the highest spots formed islands of pasture amidst the expanse of waters ruffled with the fresh breeze of morning. The waves of the lake could be made out in the distance, driven by the wind against the half-flooded bank. Some goats and cows, with their herdsman, who made a rustic music with a horn, were passing at the moment over a tongue of land left dry between the flooded plain and the Thiele. Stones set in the parts where it was worst going supported this natural causeway or

filled up gaps in it; the pasture to which the docile animals were proceeding was not in sight, and to see their slow and irresolute advance, one would have said they were about to get out into the lake and be lost there. The heights of Anet and the thick woods of Julemont rose out of the waters like a desert island without an inhabitant. The hilly chain of Vuilly edged the lake on the horizon. To the south, this chain stretched away behind the slopes of Montmirail; and farther on than all these objects, sixty leagues of eternal snows stamped the whole country with the inimitable majesty of those bold lines of nature which give to places sublimity."

He dines at the toll-house by the river-bank, and after passing the afternoon there, goes out again late in the evening:—

"The moon had not yet risen; my path lay beside the green waters of the Thiele. I had taken the key of my lodging that I might come in when I liked without being tied to a particular hour. But feeling inclined to muse, and finding the night so

warm that there was no hardship in being all night out of doors, I took the road to Saint Blaise. I left it at a little village called Marin, which has the lake to the south of it. I descended a steep bank, and got upon the shore of the lake where its ripple came up and expired. The air was calm; not a sail was to be seen on the lake. Every one was at rest; some in the forgetfulness of their toils, others in the forgetfulness of their sorrows. The moon rose; I remained there hours. Towards morning, the moon shed over earth and waters the ineffable melancholy of her last gleams. Nature seems unspeakably grand, when, plunged in a long reverie, one hears the washing of the waves upon a solitary strand, in the calm of a night still enkindled and luminous with the setting moon.

"Sensibility which no words can express, charm and torment of our vain years! vast consciousness of a nature everywhere greater than we are, and everywhere impenetrable! all-embracing passion, ripened wisdom, delicious self-abandonment, — everything that a mortal heart can contain of life-weariness and yearning, I felt it all, I experienced it

all, in this memorable night. I have made an ominous step towards the age of decline; I have swallowed up ten years of life at once. Happy the simple, whose heart is always young!"

There, in one of the hours which were at once the inspiration and the enervation of Senancour's life, we leave him. It is possible that an age, breaking with the past, and inclined to tell it the most naked truths, may take more pleasure than its predecessors in Obermann's bleak frankness, and may even give him a kind of celebrity. Nevertheless it may be predicted with certainty that his very celebrity, if he gets it, will have, like his life, something maimed, incomplete, and unsuccessful about it; and that his intimate friends will still be but a few, as they have hitherto been. These few will never fail him.

STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF "OBERMANN."[1]

NOVEMBER, 1849.

IN front the awful Alpine track
Crawls up its rocky stair;
The autumn storm-winds drive the rack,
Close o'er it, in the air.

Behind are the abandon'd baths[2]
Mute in their meadows lone;
The leaves are on the valley-paths,
The mists are on the Rhone —

The white mists rolling like a sea!
I hear the torrents roar.
— Yes, Obermann, all speaks of thee;
I feel thee near once more!

I turn thy leaves! I feel their breath
Once more upon me roll;
That air of languor, cold, and death,
Which brooded o'er thy soul.

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1 See Arnold's note given on p. 118. This poem first appeared in *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*, 1852.

2 The Baths of Leuk. This poem was conceived, and partly composed, in the valley going down from the foot of the Gemmi Pass towards the Rhone.

Fly hence, poor wretch, whoe'er thou art,
Condemn'd to cast about,
All shipwreck in thy own weak heart,
For comfort from without!

A fever in these pages burns
Beneath the calm they feign;
A wounded human spirit turns,
Here, on its bed of pain.

Yes, though the virgin mountain-air
Fresh through these pages blows;
Though to these leaves the glaciers spare
The soul of their white snows;

Though here a mountain-murmur swells
Of many a dark-bough'd pine;
Though, as you read, you hear the bells
Of the high-pasturing kine —

Yet, through the hum of torrent lone,
And brooding mountain-bee,
There sobs I know not what ground-tone
Of human agony.

Is it for this, because the sound
Is fraught too deep with pain,
That, Obermann! the world around
So little loves thy strain?

Some secrets may the poet tell,
For the world loves new ways;
To tell too deep ones is not well —
It knows not what he says.

Yet, of the spirits who have reign'd
In this our troubled day,
I know but two, who have attain'd,
Save thee, to see their way.

By England's lakes, in grey old age,
His quiet home one keeps;
And one, the strong much-toiling sage,
In German Weimar sleeps.

But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
From half of human fate;
And Goethe's course few sons of men
May think to emulate.

For he pursued a lonely road,
His eyes on Nature's plan;
Neither made man too much a God,
Nor God too much a man.

Strong was he, with a spirit free
From mists, and sane, and clear;
Clearer, how much! than ours — yet we
Have a worse course to steer.

For though his manhood bore the blast
Of a tremendous time,
Yet in a tranquil world was pass'd
His tenderer youthful prime.

But we, brought forth and rear'd in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise —
What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?

Like children bathing on the shore,
Buried a wave beneath,
The second wave succeeds, before
We have had time to breathe.

Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harass'd, to attain
Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
And luminous view to gain.

And then we turn, thou sadder sage,
To thee! we feel thy spell!
— The hopeless tangle of our age,
Thou too hast scann'd it well!

Immoveable thou sittest, still
As death, composed to bear!
Thy head is clear, thy feeling chill,
And icy thy despair.

Yes, as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now:
Greater by far than thou art dead;
Strive not! die also thou!

Ah! two desires toss about
The poet's feverish blood.
One drives him to the world without,
And one to solitude.

The glow, he cries, *the thrill of life,*
Where, where do these abound? —
Not in the world, not in the strife
Of men, shall they be found.

He who hath watch'd, not shared, the strife,
Knows how the day hath gone.
He only lives with the world's life,
Who hath renounced his own.

To thee we come, then! Clouds are roll'd
Where thou, O seer! art set;
Thy realm of thought is drear and cold —
The world is colder yet!

And thou hast pleasures, too, to share
With those who come to thee —
Balms floating on thy mountain-air,
And healing sights to see.

How often, where the slopes are green
On Jaman, hast thou sate
By some high chalet-door, and seen
The summer-day grow late;

And darkness steal o'er the wet grass
With the pale crocus starr'd,
And reach that glimmering sheet of glass
Beneath the piny sward,

Lake Leman's waters, far below!
And watch'd the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow;
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue
Through the pine branches play—
Listen'd, and felt thyself grow young!
Listen'd and wept—— Away!

Away the dreams that but deceive!
And thou, sad guide, adieu!
I go, fate drives me; but I leave
Half of my life with you.

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy,
Nor, when we will, resign.

I in the world must live; but thou,
Thou melancholy shade!
Wilt not, if thou canst see me now,
Condemn me, nor upbraid.

For thou art gone away from earth,
And place with those dost claim,
The Children of the Second Birth,
Whom the world could not tame;

And with that small, transfigured band,
Whom many a different way
Conducted to their common land,
Thou learn'st to think as they.

Christian and pagan, king and slave,
Soldier and anchorite,
Distinctions we esteem so grave,
Are nothing in their sight.

They do not ask, who pined unseen,
Who was on action hurl'd,
Whose one bond is, that all have been
Unspotted by the world.

There without anger thou wilt see
Him who obeys thy spell
No more, so he but rest, like thee,
Unsoil'd!—and so, farewell.

Farewell! — Whether thou now liest near
That much-loved inland sea,
The ripples of whose blue waves cheer
Vevey and Meillerie;

And in that gracious region bland,
Where with clear-rustling wave
The scented pines of Switzerland
Stand dark round thy green grave,

Between the dusty vineyard-walls
Issuing on that green place
The early peasant still recalls
The pensive stranger's face,

And stoops to clear thy moss-grown date
Ere he plods on again; —
Or whether, by maligner fate,
Among the swarms of men,

Where between granite terraces
The blue Seine rolls her wave,
The Capital of Pleasure sees
The hardly-heard-of grave; —

Farewell! Under the sky we part,
In this stern Alpine dell.
O unstrung will! O broken heart!
A last, a last farewell!

OBERMANN ONCE MORE.[1]

(COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER THE PRECEDING.)

Savez-vous quelque bien qui console du regret d'un monde?
OBERMANN.

GLION? —— Ah, twenty years, it cuts[2]
All meaning from a name!
White houses prank where once were huts.
Glion, but not the same!

And yet I know not! All unchanged
The turf, the pines, the sky!
The hills in their old order ranged;
The lake, with Chillon by!

And, 'neath those chestnut-trees, where stiff
And stony mounts the way,
The crackling husk-heaps burn, as if
I left them yesterday!

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1 First appeared in the first edition of *New Poems*, 1867, but had additional stanzas and the notes added in the second edition, 1868.

2 Probably all who know the Vevey end of the Lake of Geneva, will recollect Glion, the mountain-village above the castle of Chillon. Glion now has hotels, *pensions*, and villas; but twenty years ago it was hardly more than the huts of Avant opposite to it, — huts through which goes that beautiful path over the Col de Jaman, followed by so many foot-travellers on their way from Vevey to the Simmenthal and Thun.

Across the valley, on that slope,
The huts of Avant shine!
Its pines, under their branches, ope
Ways for the pasturing kine.

Full-foaming milk-pails, Alpine fare,
Sweet heaps of fresh-cut grass,
Invite to rest the traveller there
Before he climb the pass —

The gentian-flower'd pass, its crown
With yellow spires aflame;[1]
Whence drops the path to Allière down,
And walls where Byron came,[2]

By their green river, who doth change
His birth-name just below;
Orchard, and croft, and full-stored grange
Nursed by his pastoral flow.

But stop! — to fetch back thoughts that stray
Beyond this gracious bound,
The cone of Jaman, pale and grey,
See, in the blue profound!

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1 The blossoms of the *Gentiana lutea*.

2 Montbovon. See Byron's Journal, in his *Works*, vol. iii, p. 258. The river Saane becomes the Sarine below Montbovon.

Ah, Jaman! delicately tall
Above his sun-warm'd firs —
What thoughts to me his rocks recall,
What memories he stirs!

And who but thou must be, in truth,
Obermann! with me here?
Thou master of my wandering youth,
But left this many a year!

Yes, I forget the world's work wrought,
Its warfare waged with pain;
An eremite with thee, in thought
Once more I slip my chain,

And to thy mountain-chalet come,
And lie beside its door,
And hear the wild bee's Alpine hum,
And thy sad, tranquil lore!

Again I feel the words inspire
Their mournful calm; serene,
Yet tinged with infinite desire
For all that *might* have been —

The harmony from which man swerved
Made his life's rule once more!
The universal order served,
Earth happier than before!

— While thus I mused, night gently ran
Down over hill and wood.
Then, still and sudden, Obermann
On the grass near me stood.

Those pensive features well I knew,
On my mind, years before,
Imaged so oft! imaged so true!
— A shepherd's garb he wore,

A mountain-flower was in his hand,
A book was in his breast.
Bent on my face, with gaze which scann'd
My soul, his eyes did rest.

"And is it thou," he cried, "so long
Held by the world which we
Loved not, who turnest from the throng
Back to thy youth and me?

"And from thy world, with heart opprest,
Choosest thou *now* to turn? —
Ah me! we anchorites read things best,
Clearest their course discern!

"Thou fledst me when the ungenial earth,
Man's work-place, lay in gloom.
Return'st thou in her hour of birth,
Of hopes and hearts in bloom?

"Perceiv'st thou not the change of day?
Ah! Carry back thy ken,
What, some two thousand years! Survey
The world as it was then!

"Like ours it look'd in outward air.
Its head was clear and true,
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,
No pause its action knew;

"Stout was its arm, each thew and bone
Seem'd puissant and alive—
But, ah! its heart, its heart was stone,
And so it could not thrive!

"On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

"In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian way.

"He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown'd his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass'd
The impracticable hours.

"The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swell'd and swell'd,
And on her head was hurl'd.

"The East bow'd low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

"So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And fill'd her life with day.

"'Poor world,' she cried, 'so deep accurst,
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst—
Go, seek it in thy soul!'

"She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword array'd!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shiver'd and obey'd.

"She veil'd her eagles, snapp'd her sword,
And laid her sceptre down;
Her stately purple she abhorr'd,
And her imperial crown.

"She broke her flutes, she stopp'd her sports,
Her artists could not please;
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces;

"Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife,
The wilderness to find.

"Tears wash'd the trouble from her face!
She changed into a child!
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood — a place
Of ruin — but she smiled!

"Oh, had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Fill'd earth and heaven, and caught away
My ravish'd spirit too!

"No thoughts that to the world belong
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave.

"No cloister-floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me.
For me no Eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee.

"No lonely life had pass'd too slow,
When I could hourly scan
Upon his Cross, with head sunk low,
That nail'd, thorn-crowned Man!

"Could see the Mother with her Child
Whose tender winning arts
Have to his little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts!

"And centuries came and ran their course,
And unspent all that time
Still, still went forth that Child's dear force,
And still was at its prime.

"Ay, ages long endured his span
Of life — 'tis true received —
That gracious Child, that thorn-crown'd Man!
— He lived while we believed.

"While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave.
Men call'd from chamber, church, and tent;
And Christ was by to save.

"Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

"In vain men still, with hoping new,
Regard his death-place dumb,
And say the stone is not yet to,
And wait for words to come.

"Ah, o'er that silent sacred land,
Of sun, and arid stone,
And crumbling wall, and sultry sand,
Sounds now one word alone!

"*Unduped of fancy, henceforth man*
Must labour! — must resign
His all too human creeds, and scan
Simply the way divine!

"But slow that tide of common thought,
Which bathed our life, retired;
Slow, slow the old world wore to nought,
And pulse by pulse expired.

"Its frame yet stood without a breach
When blood and warmth were fled;
And still it spake its wonted speech —
But every word was dead.

"And oh, we cried, that on this corse
Might fall a freshening storm!
Rive its dry bones, and with new force
A new-sprung world inform!

"— Down came the storm! O'er France it pass'd
In sheets of scathing fire;
All Europe felt that fiery blast,
And shook as it rush'd by her.

"Down came the storm! In ruins fell
The worn-out world we knew.
It pass'd, that elemental swell!
Again appear'd the blue;

"The sun shone in the new-wash'd sky,
And what from heaven saw he?
Blocks of the past, like icebergs high,
Float on a rolling sea!

"Upon them plies the race of man
All it before endeavour'd;
'Ye live,' I cried, 'ye work and plan,
And know not ye are sever'd!

"'Poor fragments of a broken world
Whereon men pitch their tent!
Why were ye too to death not hurl'd
When your world's day was spent?

"'That glow of central fire is done
Which with its fusing flame
Knit all your parts, and kept you one —
But ye, ye are the same!

"'The past, its mask of union on,
Had ceased to live and thrive.
The past, its mask of union gone,
Say, is it more alive?

"'Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead,
Your social order too!
Where tarries he, the Power who said:
See, I make all things new?

"'The millions suffer still, and grieve.
And what can helpers heal
With old-world cures men half believe
For woes they wholly feel?

"'And yet men have such need of joy!
But joy whose grounds are true;
And joy that should all hearts employ
As when the past was new.

"'Ah, not the emotion of that past,
Its common hope, were vain!
Some new such hope must dawn at last,
Or man must toss in pain.

"'But now the old is out of date,
The new is not yet born,
And who can be *alone* elate,
While the world lies forlorn?'

"Then to the wilderness I fled.—
There among Alpine snows
And pastoral huts I hid my head,
And sought and found repose,

"It was not yet the appointed hour.
Sad, patient, and resign'd,
I watch'd the crocus fade and flower,
I felt the sun and wind.

"The day I lived in was not mine,
Man gets no second day.
In dreams I saw the future shine—
But ah! I could not stay!

"Action I had not, followers, fame;
I pass'd obscure, alone.
The after-world forgets my name,
Nor do I wish it known.

"Composed to bear, I lived and died,
And knew my life was vain,
With fate I murmur not, nor chide.
At Sèvres by the Seine

"(If Paris that brief flight allow)
My humble tomb explore!
It bears: *Eternity, be thou*
My refuge! and no more.

"But thou, whom fellowship of mood
Did make from haunts of strife
Come to my mountain-solitude,
And learn my frustrate life;

"O thou, who, ere thy flying span
Was past of cheerful youth,
Didst find the solitary man
And love his cheerless truth —

"Despair not thou as I despair'd,
Nor be cold gloom thy prison!
Forward the gracious hours have fared,
And see! the sun is risen!

"He breaks the winter of the past;
A green, new earth appears.
Millions, whose life in ice lay fast,
Have thoughts, and smiles, and tears.

"What though there still need effort, strife?
Though much be still unwon?
Yet warm it mounts, the hour of life!
Death's frozen hour is done!

"The world's great order dawns in sheen,
After long darkness rude,
Divinelier imaged, clearer seen,
With happier zeal pursued.

"With hope extinct and brow composed
I mark'd the present die;
Its term of life was nearly closed,
Yet it had more than I.

"But thou, though to the world's new hour
Thou come with aspect marr'd,
Shorn of the joy, the bloom, the power,
Which best befits its bard—

"Though more than half thy years be past,
And spent thy youthful prime;
Though, round thy firmer manhood cast,
Hang weeds of our sad time

"Whereof thy youth felt all the spell,
And traversed all the shade—
Though late, though dimm'd, though weak, yet tell
Hope to a world new-made!

"Help it to fill that deep desire,
The want which rack'd our brain,
Consumed our heart with thirst like fire,
Immedicable pain;

"Which to the wilderness drove out
Our life, to Alpine snow,
And palsied all our word with doubt,
And all our work with woe—

"What still of strength is left, employ
That end to help attain:
One common wave of thought and joy
Lifting mankind again!"

—The vision ended. I awoke
As out of sleep, and no
Voice moved;—only the torrent broke
The silence, far below.

Soft darkness on the turf did lie.
Solemn, o'er hut and wood,
In the yet star-sown nightly sky,
The peak of Jaman stood.

Still in my soul the voice I heard
Of Obermann!——away
I turned; by some vague impulse stirr'd,
Along the rocks of Naye

Past Sonchaud's piny flanks I gaze
And the blanch'd summit bare
Of Malatrait, to where in haze
The Valais opens fair,

And the domed Velan, with his snows,
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills;—

And glorious there, without a sound,
Across the glimmering lake,
High in the Valais-depth profound,
I saw the morning break.

The Bibelot

PRECISELY *thirty-seven years ago in* The Dark Blue *for May, 1871, the article here reprinted in full first saw the light. From that day to the present year of grace has continued with us Mr. Andrew Lang, whose oldtime essay on* Three Poets of French Bohemia *may possibly be taken as the first of that long series of literary* causeries *which have established his name and fame wherever* belles lettres *are known and held in esteem.*

The three poets chosen by him comprise names that at the time Mr. Lang wrote were to all intents and purposes practically unknown quantities in England and America. Appearing seven years before Mr. John Payne's privately printed version of The Poems of Master François Villon of Paris *offered itself to a limited audience of one hundred and fifty-seven subscribers, the essay was followed in 1872 by the* Ballads and Lyrics of Old France — *one of the few books of translated verse which would seem destined to endure.*[1]

[1] *It is perhaps worth while recording that Mr. Mosher was the first to reprint these* Ballads and Lyrics of Old France *in his Old World Series,*

In other words, in this early contribution Andrew Lang was the one Englishman called and competent to introduce a trio of poets and romance writers whose works have since become the inalienable treasure-trove of the Anglo-Saxon race. If, as Mr. Edmund Gosse has claimed, the earliest introduction of certain exotic forms of verse into English prosody is due to himself in 1873 or thereabouts, it is also certain that Mr. Lang contests that honour in having discovered and made over to us a still more delightful parterre *of French letters.*

Henceforth our mother tongue has been well provided for in respect of renditions from François Villon, Gérard de Nerval, and Henri Murger. "Sad bad glad mad brothers" one and all, singers of "mutable loves and loves perverse" they were long ago "washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time," and out of the impermanence of passion have distilled immortal art!

(1896), followed in due course by several reissues. In 1907 Mr. Lang, himself, finally yielded and "moved by the request of a friend" a new edition came out in London without change or intermeddling with the original text, thereby justifying what he had so acrimoniously decried when done by an American admirer eleven years before.

THREE POETS OF FRENCH BOHEMIA

By

ANDREW LANG.

IT is quite true that Villon was an outcast and vagabond, sometimes a thief, that he consorted with scoundrels and cut-throats and harlots, and that he narrowly escaped being hanged; but — In the pit of all filth and impurity, and wickedness and despair, and horror that Villon lived we see enshrined this miracle which justifies the ways of God to men, that he preserved a beautiful and serene splendour of soul, a divine and constant light of better things.

ALFRED, LORD DOUGLAS.

WHAT he [de Nerval] will live by is his story of "Sylvie;" it is one of the little masterpieces of the world. . . . The story is full of those artless, lisping numbers of the popular French Muse, the ancient ballads that Gérard collected and put in the mouth of Sylvie, the pretty peasant girl. . . . I translated these fragments long ago in one of the first things I ever tried to write. The passages are as touching and fresh, the originals I mean, as when first I read them, and one hears the voice of Sylvie singing:

"A Dammartin, l'y a trois belles filles,
L'y en a z'une plus belle que le jour!"

ANDREW LANG.

IT has been gravely inquired whether these *Scènes de la Vie de Bohême* are true to life; whether Musette, Rudolphe, and Mimi are probable characters; whether the sentiment of the whole thing is not false sentiment. People ask such strange questions! As long as men and women are young, and not quite virtuous, so long will this kind of life exist, just thus; and never has it been rendered so simply, sympathetically, and with so youthful a touch of sentiment, as in Murger's pages. . . . To be five-and-twenty, poor, and in love: that is enough; at that age, and under those circumstances, you will feel that Murger has said everything.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

THREE POETS OF FRENCH BOHEMIA.

FRANÇOYS VILLON, 1431–14–; GÉRARD DE NERVAL, 1808–1855; HENRI MURGER, 1822–1861.

R. I. P.

HENRI MURGER says somewhere that "the true Bohemia is only possible in Paris," and the remark is so far true that it is only Paris which afforded the proper conditions for the growth of that curious artistic society, whose mate is Poverty, and which knows no laws save those of comradeship. Bohemia is the land of poor students, of unrecognised artists, of everyone that loves letters and license, and is vexed by the conventions of society. It was mediæval Paris that first brought together the elements of Bohemia, containing as she did the most luxurious and lawless court, side by side with the University, overcrowded by poor students. Among the effects of the Academy too, and of those tendencies in the French mind which produced the Academy, was the growth of a literary class, of which the *raison d'être* was to resist the Academy, to be reckless while the

Forty were intensely respectable, young while they were old, inspired and indolent while they were learned. And even before the institution of the Academy, there was an official literature patronised by the court, and a literature that envied and despised. The dissolute student who gets his ten crowns for writing a religious farce or *sotie* is in natural opposition to the rhymers who live with Charles d'Orleans, or to Ronsard exchanging sonnets and compliments with Charles IX. The ragged muse gibes at the muse attired in silks and lace; the lover of *la belle qui fut Heaulmière*, Villon's mistress, the first of historical grisettes, looks down on the courtlier suitors with their allegories and cold complimentary sonnets. England has never combined the university with the capital, nor fixed so wide a gulf between two classes of men of letters. The students of mediæval Oxford may have been as poor and miserable as those of Paris, but they did not live in the midst of the license of a great city. They might beg, if they were lucky enough to get permission, but they could not *tromper devant et derrière*, trick and steal right

and left, undetected, like Maître Françoys Villon. The students of the Inns of Court, whose position might seem more closely to resemble that of the Parisian undergraduate, were neither so poor nor so sprightly as they. Little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Will Squele the Cotswold man, with all their mad doings "about Turnbull Street," had ever the fear of the law they were supposed to study before their eyes. Besides, the English character is too domestic, has too little of the gaiety that takes no care for its own morrow, too little of the melancholy that is oppressed by the over-keenly felt sadness of all the forgotten yesterdays and hopeless morrows of all humanity, to produce the sentimental Bohemian.

It is to France, then, that we must turn for studies of this strange kingdom of poetry and lawless art, of loves and duns, of banquets and starvation; a country filled with an air that only youth should breathe, informed with a magic that holds youth too often spell-bound with a spell only broken by shameful death. This is a realm the history of which is not worth writing, though

its annals are neither happy nor uneventful, for here, at least, history repeats itself. It is enough to glance at a page or two: Villon's life is only a ruder form of Savage's, De Nerval's of Otway's, and his last end is as his. Musicians and painters we pass over, for their art is not necessarily the record of their lives, and turn to Françoys Villon, the earliest French poet, exhibiting in the bud all the sad colour and strange scent of the perfect flower; the first French Bohemian, "first vocal tongue of the dumb painful people."

The first poet we have called him, because it is in him first that poetry wakes to personality, ceases to sing, however gracefully, of imaginary sorrows and in traditional forms. Villon does not dream of walking in the woods in spring-time, he hears in his visions no singing birds of April, meets no imagined mistress, is prisoner in no fancied Castle of Dangier or Soussy. His prison is in truth the Châtelet, where he eats of the cold and drinks of the warm, and whence he expects only to pass to the gibbet; the songs are those of son's love, that he makes for his mother; of true love that death has

severed; of loveless love for *la grosse Margot*. Life and death he sees with purged and purely human eyes, not as they came draped in fantastic attire to his courtly rival and benefactor, Charles Duke of Orleans. His subject is his own life, a wasted fragment of time, full of regrets and of despised pleasures, yet to him worth writing of.

Villon was born in Paris in the year 1431, "of poor and lowly line." In the winter of his twenty-fifth year, "the dead season, when the wolves are filled with wind for food, and all men bide by the fire," and again in his thirtieth year, he wrote his confessions, "the Great and Little Testaments," and relieved, as far as might be, his regretful soul. In these poems we have the whole life of a child of the people, and of that age and all ages. We see him sent to the University, "but to what good? I shunned the school like a truant child; in writing this my heart is almost broken." We can fancy Villon, living in the best of bad society, his chief share in true University life being to make a noise at the election of Rectors; we can imagine him one of the unlucky students whom the chief of the

town police "used to amuse himself by imprisoning," as the historian of Paris University relates. Probably there was no more sturdy rebel against the rule of Cardinal d'Estouteville, that the students in general, like the poorer undergraduates at St. Andrews in old times, should sit on the ground during lecture. We may spare a sigh, too, for the fact that in Villon's time the same reformer introduced an examination, bearing all the most repulsive features of that now known as responsions or smalls. Perhaps this was the intolerable infliction that drove Villon from study, and sent him wandering over France with a band of strolling players. He loses sight of his old set, of whom he writes thus in the "Grand Testament:"

Ah, where be all the gallants young
  With whom I went, in days of old,
So sweet of song, so kind of tongue,
  In deed and word so glad and bold?
  Lo! many a one is dead and cold,
Their souls abide the saints among,
  Of them it is no longer told;
God give the rest good reckoning.

And some that I of old did know
  Are lords and masters in the land;

And naked some a-begging go,
And see bread only when they stand
To stare through windows; and a band
Turned monks, in cells of the Chartreuse:
No oyster fishers through the sand
Than these my friends trail thicker shoes.

The exact force of the allusion to oyster fishers is not very clear, but Villon is full of obscurities, which after the lapse of only two generations were unintelligible to Clément Marot.

Ever after he left Paris Villon's career is that of an obscure wanderer in the subterranean regions of Rascaldom. We are told by Rabelais that in his old age — Villon's name and old age seem almost a contradiction in terms — he retired to St. Maxent in Poictou, and there continued to direct the acting of Passion-plays. He himself, in his ballad "A ceux de mauvaise vie," confesses that this was a disreputable mode of life, and that its proceeds went *tout aux tavernes et aux filles*. When spectators were few or stingy, he and his band would be driven to all the thievish tricks to obtain a supper, celebrated in the "Franches Repues," or Free Dinner tables. For such exploits the people had easy forgiveness; they form

the incidents of the contemporary farce of "Patelin," which has been attributed to Villon, though almost certainly it is not his. But if the people laughed at the way in which Taverner, Draper, Baker were tricked, the law took a different view. Twice at least Villon was cast into prison, escaping hanging by the grace of Louis XI. These were times when, as a writer of the next century says, "Paris was shadowy with a grove of gallows trees." From the gloom of this forest Villon wandered who knows where? He was the laureate of the thieves' house; we may imagine how his companions bullied, despised, wondered at him, and his fits of melancholy and repentance. Doubtless when the end came "the worms found no great feast, for famine had been before them." Our present concern is not with his life but with his poems.

These, as they are the first, are almost the greatest of all French lyrics, and they contain almost all the qualities, good and bad, of the French muse. To appreciate them requires no historical attitude of mind, they deal with the universal elements of human life. Villon is as frankly shameless

as Rousseau; his own shame is often the material of his art; it is only in the "Confessions" that the ballad of "La Grosse Margot" is to be matched. Yet even here the note of repentance comes in:

> Nous deffuyons honneur, il nous deffuyt,
> En ce bourdel où tenons nostre estat.

In all his treatment of love Villon is thoroughly French. The advice of "la belle Heaulmière" has been acted on by her descendants all through fiction and life. They are to be harpies, serpents, cats,

> swift and white,
> And subtly warm, and half perverse,
> And sweet like sharp soft fruit to bite,
> And like a snake's love lithe and fierce.

Listen to her words of wisdom:

> Prenez à dextre et à senestre,
> N'espargnez homme, je vous prie.

Yet Villon has another note and can sing of another woman; this Gringoire has an Esmeralda unlike Margot, as Hesperia is unlike Dolores. To this lost love he addressed the "Lay of Death," translated by Mr. Rossetti, and in a courtlier strain

the ballad, if it be really his, called "La Plante d'Amours." This we have attempted to translate, as an example of the recurring rhymes and refrain of which Villon is a master.

ARBOR AMORIS.

I have a tree, a graft of Love,
That in my heart has taken root;
Sad are the buds and blooms thereof
And bitter sorrow is its fruit;
Yet, since it was a tender shoot,
So greatly hath its shadow spread,
That underneath all joy is dead,
And all my pleasant days are flown,
Nor can I slay it, nor instead
Plant any tree, save this alone.

Ah, yet, for long and long enough
My tears were rain about its root,
And though the fruit be harsh thereof,
I scarcely looked for better fruit
Than this, that carefully I put
In garner, for the bitter bread
Whereon my weary life is fed:
Ah, better were the soil unsown
That bears such growths, but Love instead
Will plant no tree, but this alone.

Ah, would that this new spring, whereof
The leaves and flowers flush into shoot,
I might have succour and aid of Love

To prune these branches at the root,
That long have borne such bitter fruit;
And graft a new bough, comforted
With happy blossoms white and red,
So pleasure should for pain atone,
Nor Love slay this tree, nor instead
Plant any tree, but this alone.

L'ENVOY.

Princess, by whom my hopes are fed,
My heart thee prays in lowlihead
To prune the ill boughs overgrown,
Nor slay Love's tree, nor plant instead
Another tree, save this alone.

Intensely French in the bitterness with which he sings of his lighter loves, Villon is no less French in the beauty of his filial tenderness. In the Great Testament he writes that "much sadness" his mother bore for his sake, and the ballad he made for her to our Lady, so wonderfully translated by Mr. Rossetti, is the most innocent and pathetic of his poems. "She must die one day, poor woman, and she knows it," he says, and then he begins to dream, after his custom, of death and of fading beauty, that "cannot keep her lustrous eyes." This theme has an unconquerable attraction for

him. Like Charles Baudelaire he has written of *les petites vieilles*, the women who have been queens of hearts, and whose sceptre has passed with the passing of their beauty. For him, no less than for the sombre later singer, these eyes have power to waken sad reveries:

Ces yeux sont des puits faits d'un million de larmes,
Des creusets qu'un métal refroidi pailleta . . .
Ces yeux mystérieux ont d'invincibles charmes.

On this theme his greatest poem is the famous "Ballad of Dead Ladies." Mr. Rossetti's translation, perhaps the most perfect of all his exquisite translations, must again be referred to. This note of passionate regret for past youth and passing life, too bitter and too grievous to deal with symbols of fleeting roses, as in Herrick, is not struck first by Villon in French poetry. He only prolongs the air sounded by Thibault de Marly, the grandson of our own Henry I., the weary crusader who wrote a book of *chansons* on Death, and saw Death hiding where Sophocles saw Love:

ἐν μαλακαῖς παρειαῖς
νεάνιδος,

or, as the antique French has it:

> Mors, qui est veue et escr
> En le vielle face despite,
> Se repont bien en jovenciax.

In tenderness and bitterness, in recklessness and repentance, in lighter malice and in the sorrowing sense of life's brief endurance, Villon is the master of Regnier, of Baudelaire, of Chateaubriand, of De Musset; while in keen pity for human fortunes and in grotesque power he sometimes recalls Victor Hugo. Compare his "Ballad of the Gibbet" with the terrible scene of the hanged men in "L'homme qui rit:"

BALLAD OF THE GIBBET.

[An epitaph in the form of a ballad that Françoys Villon wrote of himself and his company, they expecting shortly to be hanged.]

Brothers and men that shall after us be,
  Let not your hearts be hard to us:
For pitying this our misery
  Ye shall find God the more piteous.
  Look on us six that are hanging thus,
And for the flesh that so much we cherished
How it is eaten of birds and perished,
  And ashes and dust fill our bones' place,
Mock not at us that so feeble be,
  But pray God pardon us out of His grace.

Listen, we pray you, and look not in scorn,
  Though justly, in sooth, we are cast to die,
Ye wot no man so wise is born
  That keeps his wisdom constantly.
  Be ye then merciful and cry
To Mary's Son that is piteous,
That His mercy take no stain from us,
  Saving us out of the fiery place.
We are but dead, let no soul deny
  To pray God succour us of His grace.

The water of heaven has washed us clean,
  The sun has scorched us black and bare,
Ravens and rooks they have pecked at our een,
  And lined their nests with our beards and hair;
  Round are we tossed, and here and there,
This way and that at the wild wind's will,
Not for a moment our bodies are still —
  Birds they are busy about my face.
Be not as we, nor fare as we fare —
  Pray God pardon us out of His grace.

Our translation cannot hope to render the intensity of vision displayed in this poem, the very cadence of which has a heavy and reluctant swing:

Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie.

When after this ballad is read "Les Contredictz de Franc Gontier," a gay and cynical mockery of the fancied pleasures of pastoral life and pastoral poetry, the coarse

bread and cold water that have no ideal attraction for the wandering player, we have considered the most characteristic examples of Villon's genius. It may be said of him that to the originality which dared to be straightforward in an age of allegory, to be personal in an age of traditional matter and form, to deal with the people's life as it was in an age that knew not the people, to the skill which strikes music from the most complicated and difficult metres, to the clear vision and sad heart of a great poet, he adds the historic charm which informs all ancient ballads springing from the gladness or regret of some nameless son of the people. His poems have the touching truth of Clerk Saunders, or the "Wife of Usher's Well," or of those French country ballads which the subject of our next sketch, Gérard de Nerval, was wont to collect. Like these, they are a voice from hidden places, fragments of a history that can never be written, the history of the villein and the serf and the lesser bourgeoisie.

Four hundred years are supposed to pass, as in a stage direction, before we come to our next Bohemian poet. The scene is still

Paris, as she was before the ædileship of Hausmann. The lanes and spires and quaint deserted palaces that Doré has drawn still exist, and are tenanted, here and there, by the members of a new Bohemia. These are the leaders of the Romantic school, not miserable students and thieves like Villon, but young men of genius, of education, of fair means, some of them of noble birth, all in mad revolt against the Academy and classicism, all bent either on reproducing the Middle Ages or on exaggerating the modern times. Reaction against commonplace in literature and life has been carried to the point of supposing that art should either breathe in the dreamy atmosphere, the languid garden air of mediæval love, and go clad in "strait gowns of vair" of antique hue and shape, or explore the inmost recesses of corrupt society and sing of the remotest vagaries of wearied passion. In real life society and her rules were as much despised as convention in art. The family and family life were only fit for grocers, politics might interest national guards, but a poet should be occupied by pleasure, and by the "*passion féroce du beau.*"

Some of the band of young artists lived to regret their folly and affectation; to the best of them their lawless life, Mohawk quite as much as Bohemian, had never been anything but a jest. But there was one, unhappily, who took the thing in earnest, who really despised wealth and fame and repute, who imitated in no half-hearted fashion the migratory scholars and poets of the middle age and the earlier Renaissance. This was the poet who wrote under the assumed name of Gérard de Nerval. A distinguished school companion of Théophile Gautier's, a linguist, a philosopher — he actually studied Böhm and Hegel — he possessed in a degree exceeding even De Quincy the quality of "casualness." Money was a perplexing convention in his eyes, a home a mere piece of pedantry. He preferred to have no fixed place of residence, and would travel through Germany or the East, like a wandering scholar of the Renaissance, trusting to the charity of convents and consuls, and writing articles and tales in the local reviews. His original poems were composed, for the most part, before he began this nomad life. They are

slight and graceful, moving in the antique metres of Du Belleau. As a specimen we may translate

AN OLD TUNE.

There is an air for which I would disown
  Mozart's, Rossini's, Weber's melodies;
  A sad sweet air that languishes and sighs,
And keeps its secret charm for me alone.

Whene'er I hear that music vague and old—
  Two hundred years are "mist that rolls away"—
The thirteenth Louis reigns, and I behold
  A green land golden in the dying day,

An old red castle, strong with stony towers,
  The windows bright with many-coloured glass,
Wide plains, and streamlets flowing among flowers,
  That wash the castle basement as they pass.

In antique weed, with dark eyes and gold hair,
  A lady looks forth from her casement high,
It may be that I knew and found her fair
  In some forgotten life long time gone by.

In another poem he compares the black spot which floats everywhere before the eyes of one who had gazed too steadily on the sun to the shadow that covers the life of those who have looked forward eagerly to fame and know that they have missed it.

This can scarcely have been a sorrow of this born Bohemian. His pleasure was to wander alone and dreamily in the loneliest country places, making friends with the peasants, and learning from their shy lips the musical old ballads of provincial France. We think of him as M. Champfleury describes him in these his happy days, lying in the poplar shadow, a careless figure, with no answer but some scrap of song, *vole, mon cœur, vole*, to the puzzled gendarme's demand for his passport. One such ballad we may translate, collected by Gérard in fragments, and pieced out from the Provençal *chanson* on the same theme. The central incident will be recognised by all readers of the Border minstrelsy.

THE THREE CAPTAINS.

All beneath the white-rose tree,
Walks a lady fair to see,
  She is as white as the snows,
She is as fair as the day:
  From her father's garden close
Three knights have ta'en her away.

He has ta'en her by the hand,
  The youngest of the three—

" Mount and ride, my bonny bride,
On my white horse with me."

And ever they rode, and better rode,
Till they came to Senlis town,
The hostess she looked hard at them
As they were lighting down.

" And are ye here by force," she said,
" Or are ye here for play? "
" From out my father's garden close
Three knights me stole away.

" And fain would I win back," she said,
" The weary way I come,
And fain would see my father dear,
And fain go maiden home."

" Oh, weep not lady fair," said she,
" You shall win back," she said,
" For you shall take this draught from me
Will make you lie for dead."

" Come in and sup, fair lady," they said,
" Come busk ye and be bright,
It is with three bold captains
That ye must be this night."

When they had eaten well and drunk,
She fell down like one slain:
" Now, out and alas for my bonny may
Shall live no more again."

They bore her to her father's house,
They bore her all the three,

They laid her in her father's close,
Beneath the white-rose tree.

She had not lain a day, a day,
A day but barely three,
When the may awakes, "Oh, open, father,
Oh, open the door for me.

"'Tis I have lain for dead, father,
Have lain the long days three,
That I might maiden come again
To my mother and to thee."

This modern scholar-gipsy was unhappily not born

In days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames.

The "feverish contact" and the "strange disease of modern life" infected him, Paris claimed him, the love of one of his own *filles de feu* and her death ruined his reason. He recovered and relapsed, wrote mystic sonnets and reveries as strange as those of Poe. One January night of 1855 he was a guest at a gay supper of artists and actresses, was singing "with pallid lips,"

Les belles choses
N'ont qu'un temps ;
Semons de roses
Les pas du temps.

The winter roses could not hide Time's flying feet that had left Gérard's youth behind. Before February came in Gérard de Nerval had died by a sadder death than Chatterton's. Of his many prisons none now held — neither wall nor bar nor body of flesh — that light and tameless soul from the dreamed-of ways and waters of the Hollow Land. Earth and men's censure may be light on the light dust and the uncared-for fame.

With Henri Murger we are introduced to a Bohemia which is neither that of ingenious scoundrelism nor of fantasy and affectation. His "Bohemians," whose miseries and pleasures he sketches with so light a hand, are young men of the poorer classes, conscious of a vocation for art, and bearing the hardships of their probation with French gaiety and endurance. It is the life that Balzac describes in "Les Illusions perdus," a life of cheap restaurants with "bread at discretion," of hard work, of brief holidays at Meudon and Fontainebleu. For those who have true genius and good constitutions Bohemia is only a debatable land between youth and fame, for others it is an enchanted

country with no outlet. Murger found it to be both. His descriptions of student and grisette brought him money and reputation, but Bohemian life had become necessary to him, existence after youth had passed was worthless to him, and he died in a hospital at the age of thirty-eight. Murger's own story is very much that of one of his characters. He was the son of poor parents, he educated himself, and threw himself on the *petits journaux* for his means of livelihood. In fine weather he may have sometimes resided, like his hero Rodolphe, "in the Avenue St. Cloud, the third tree on the left as you leave the Bois de Boulogne, on the fifth branch." In winter he may have warmed himself, when all his furniture had been used as firewood, by burning his early poetry, and may have found "that the third act was much too short." He wrote in a journal of fashion, and no doubt gave balls to Phémie *Teinturière*, to Mimi and Musette, when he had a play accepted at one of the little theatres; and walked with the same young ladies in the woods of Versailles. That his life was a hard one there can be no doubt: his pathetic "Lettre à un Mort"

tells with obvious sincerity how he lacked house and bread and fire, how he envied his dead friend's rest, how hopeless he was of success and fame. These came to him at last. He was introduced by M. de Pontmartin, who spoke cruelly of him after his death — as he has the habit of speaking of everyone who is successful, or deserves success — to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. But good fortune came too late to Henri Murger; he had never intended to grow old: he had arranged his life in the certain expectation of early death. Life became a race with debts, the winters grew longer, the springs less happy; he died in his thirty-eighth year. Of his novels this is not the place to speak; no one who has read them but has laughed with Schaunard and Marcel, but has gone near to weep with Francine. De Musset has written nothing more gay, more sad, more gracious. His poetry, collected in a little volume, "Les Nuits d'Hiver," has less of the mirth, more of the pain and hopelessness of the Bohemian. Spring and youth are the themes, and the light passing loves that are all the Bohemian can hope for.

If the stray love that is ours
  Of her chance grace for a while
Make our song flush into flowers
  In the sunshine of her smile,
Thanks be hers as kind and dear:
  Love her while so much is sure,
Though she's constant, though she veer,
  "Youth's a stuff will not endure."

The song of "Musette" is in the same key. A student is mourning for that flown bird when she returns, to find the old love dead in both.

Your memory has not had time to pass,
  Our youth has days of its lifetime yet,
If you only knocked at the door, alas!
  My heart would open the door, Musette.
Still at your name must my sad heart beat,
  Ah Muse, ah maiden of faithlessness!
Return for a moment, and deign to eat
  The bread that pleasure was wont to bless.

Come, you shall wear the raiment white
  You wore of old, when the world was gay,
We will wander in woods of the heart's delight
  The whole of the Sunday holiday.
Come, we will sit by the wayside inn,
  Come, and your song will gain force to fly,
Dipping its wing in the clear and thin
  Wine, as of old, ere it scale the sky.

Musette, who had scarcely forgotten withal
  One beautiful dawn of the new year's best,
Returned at the end of the carnival,
  A flown bird, to a forsaken nest.
Ah faithless and fair, I embrace her yet,
  With no heart-beat, and with never a sigh,
And Musette, no longer the old Musette,
  Declares that I am no longer I.

Farewell, my dear that was once so dear,
  Dead with the death of our latest love,
Our youth is laid in its sepulchre,
  The calendar stands for a stone above.
'Tis only in searching the dust of the days,
  The ashes of all old memories,
That we find the key of the woodland ways
  That lead to the place of our paradise.

Of all the French poets who have sung of spring, since spring songs were the commonplace of poetry, none have celebrated the year's renewal with more acute pleasure than Murger. "Winter killed him," it has been said, and the longing for spring was a fever with him who knew so well the cold of wintry Paris. Our last quotation from him is full of his qualities, the gay and regretful life, with its sordid cares, and gleams of summer.

SPRING IN THE STUDENT'S QUARTER.

Winter is passing, and the bells
  For ever with their silver lay
Murmur a melody that tells
  Of April and of Easter day.
High in sweet air the light vane sets,
  The weathercocks all southward twirl;
A sou will buy her violets
  And make Nini a happy girl.

The winter to the poor was sore,
  Counting the weary winter days,
Watching his little fire-wood store,
  The cruel snow-flakes fell always;
And now his last log dimly gleamed,
  Lighting the room with feeble glare,
Half cinder and half smoke it seemed
  That the wind wafted into air.

Pilgrims from ocean and far isles
  See where the east is reddening,
The flocks that fly a thousand miles
  From sunsetting to sunsetting;
Look up, look out, behold the swallows,
  The throats that twitter, the wings that beat,
And on their song the summer follows,
  And in the summer life is sweet.

. . . . . .

With the green tender buds that know
  The shoot and sap of lusty spring
My neighbour of a year ago
  Her casement, see, is opening;

Through all the bitter months that were,
Forth from her nest she dared not flee,
She was a study for Boucher,
She now might sit to Gavarni.

With these lines we may take farewell of Murger. He said of himself, that in reading La Fontaine's fable his heart was always on the side of the singing grasshopper. He made no provision for that latest and early winter of his life — his life that was in love with youth, and did not care to live without "Nature, Hope, and Poesy;" that knew

no grief more bitter than to say
Farewell, still yearning for the days gone gray.

The Bibelot

IN "*this small rosary of rhyme*" *the latest*[1] *offering of one who died last October in Florence, lies garnered* "*the memory of a little life*" *that only knew* "*two radiant Tuscan springs.*" *Six years ago*[2] *in* The Bibelot *we printed twenty of Eugene Lee-Hamilton's* Sonnets of the Wingless Hours; *in this suite of twenty memorial sonnets there is that higher note of sorrow in song which lifts and leaves his verse upon a very great height of elegiac beauty.*

One naturally recalls other poets who have gone through a similar experience. There is A Little Child's Monument *by Roden Noel, and the still less known and appreciated* Aber Stations *by Thomas Edward Brown, also Elizabeth Rachel Chapman's* A Little Child's Wreath, *which last may have suggested* Mimma Bella.

"*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" *We all know those words.* "*Is it not well with the child?*" *We all*

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1 *See* Fortnightly Review, *for November, 1907.*

2 *They have been recently rediscovered by Mrs. Wharton in* The Bookman, *for November, 1907.*

know the answer: It is *well. Between the date of the oldest English elegy extant and this sonnet-sequence of to-day, five hundred years have gone as a watch in the night, and yet in the poem called* Pearl *as in these sonnets, there is the same authentic utterance. So great the lapse of time, so slight the change in what humanity holds nearest and dearest and evermore will hug to heart!*

In Blake's exquisite frontispiece to A Father's Memoirs of His Child, (*1806*) *we see symbolized the relationship of earthly and heavenly love; a mother kneeling on the sheer cliff-edge, a childish form just withdrawn from her outstretched arms grasping the hand of the angelic messenger but still turning back toward that lonely figure, eternal type of parent-love the wide world over. Father and mother knew this sorrow over a century ago, and have been comforted. So, too, the author of* Mimma Bella *has found his own.*

Rest little love! rest well my heart's desire!
Sleep while the storm-winds blow, the furious rage;
Sleep till the foes of God and goodness tire;
Sleep till the earth fulfils her pilgrimage."

MIMMA BELLA:
IN MEMORY OF A LITTLE LIFE
By
EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

LIKE to the leaf that falls,
Like to the rose that fades,
Thou art — and still art not!
We whom this thought enthralls,
We whom this mystery shades,
Are bared before our lot!

Like to the light gone out,
Like to the sun gone down,
Thou art — and yet we feel
That something more than doubt,
And more than Nature's frown,
The Great Good must reveal.

'Tis not with thankless heart,
Nor yet with covert hand,
We reach from deeps to thee:
We take our grief apart,
And with it bravely stand
Beside the voiceless sea!

O gentle memory mine —
I fill the world with thee,
And with thy blessing sleep!
But for thy love divine
To warm the day for me,
Why should I wake or weep?

HORACE TRAUBEL.

MIMMA BELLA.[1]

IN MEMORY OF A LITTLE LIFE.

I.

HAVE dark Egyptians stolen thee away,
Oh Baby, Baby, in whose cot we peer
As down some empty gulf that opens sheer
And fathomless, illumined by no ray?

And wilt thou come, on some far distant day,
With unknown face, and say, "Behold! I'm here,
The child you lost;" while we in sudden fear,
Dumb with great doubt, shall find no word to say?

One darker than dark gipsy holds thee fast;
One whose strong fingers none has forced apart
Since first they closed on things that were too fair;

Nor shall we see thee other than thou wast,
But such as thou art printed in the heart,
In changeless baby loveliness still there.

---

[1] Baby Beautiful.

II.

Two springs she saw — two radiant Tuscan springs,
  What time the wild red tulips are aflame
  In the new wheat, and wreaths of young vine frame
The daffodils that every light breeze swings;

And the anemones that April brings
  Make purple pools, as if Adonis came
  Just there to die; and Florence scrolls her name
In every blossom Primavera flings.

Now, when the scented iris, straight and tall,
  Shall hedge the garden gravel once again
With pale blue flags, at May's exulting call,

And when the amber roses, wet with rain,
  Shall tapestry the old grey villa wall,
We, left alone, shall seek one bud in vain.

III.

If we could know the silent shapes that pass
  Across our lives, we should perchance have seen
  God's Messenger with dusky pinions lean
Above the cot, and scan as in the glass

Of some clear forest water, framed in grass,
  The likeness of his own seraphic mien;
  And heard the call, implacably serene,
Of Him who is, who will be, and who was.

Oh Azraël, why tookest thou the child
  'Neath thy great wings, that lock as in a vice,
From all that is alive and warm and fond,

To where a rayless sun that never smiled
  Looks down on his own face in the pale ice
Of vast and lifeless seas in the Beyond?

IV.

Oh, rosy as the lining of a shell
  Were the wee hands that now are white as snows;
  And like pink coral, with their elfin toes,
The feet that on life's brambles never fell.

And with its tiny smile, adorable
  The mouth that never knew life's bitter sloes;
  And like the incurved petal of a rose
The little ear, now deaf in Death's strong spell.

Now, while the seasons in their order roll,
  And sun and rain pour down from God's great dome,
And deathless stars shine nightly overhead,

Near other children, with her little doll,
  She waits the wizard that will never come
To wake the sleep-struck playground of the dead.

V.

What wast thou, little baby, that art dead —
  A one day's blossom that the hoar-frost nips?
  A bee that's crushed, the first bright day it sips?
A small dropped gem that in the earth we tread?

Or cherub's smiling gold-encircled head,
  That Death from out Life's painted missal rips?
  Or murmured prayer that barely reached the lips?
Or sonnet's fair first line — the rest unsaid?

Oh, 'tis not hard to find what thou wast like;
  The world is full of fair unfinished things
That vanish like a dawn-admonished elf.

Life teems with opening forms for Death to strike;
  The woods are full of unfledged broken wings;
Enough for us, thou wast thy baby self.

VI.

Oh, bless the law that veils the Future's face;
For who could smile into a baby's eyes,
Or bear the beauty of the evening skies,
If he could see what cometh on apace?

The ticking of the death-watch would replace
The baby's prattle for the over-wise;
The breeze's murmur would become the cries
Of stormy petrels where the breakers race.

We live as moves the walker in his sleep,
Who walks because he sees not the abyss
His feet are skirting as he goes his way:

If we could see the morrow from the steep
Of our security, the soul would miss
Its footing, and fall headlong from to-day.

VII.

Mantled in purple dusk, Imperial Death,
Thy throne Time's mist, thy crown the clustered stars,
Thy orb the world; — did Nature's countless wars
Yield insufficient incense for thy breath?

Hadst not enough with all who troop beneath
Thy inward-opening gates, whose shadowy bars
Give back nor kings in their triumphal cars,
Nor the worn throngs that old age hurrieth?

O sateless Death, most surely it was thou,
(A thousand ages, yea, and longer still,
Before the words were heard in Galilee)

That saidst with dark contraction of thy brow,
As through all Nature ran an icy chill:
"Now let the little children come to me."

VIII.

One day, I mind me, now that she is dead,
When nothing warned us of the dark decree,
I crooned, to lull her, in a minor key,
Such fancies as first came into my head.

I crooned them low, beside her little bed;
And the refrain was somehow "Come with me,
And we will wander by the purple sea;"
I crooned it, and — God help me! — felt no dread.

O Purple Sea, beyond the stress of storms,
Where never ripple breaks upon the shore
Of Death's pale Isles of Twilight as they dream,

Give back, give back, O Sea of Nevermore,
The frailest of the unsubstantial forms
That leave the shores that are for those that seem!

IX.

O brook that fell too soon into the sea,
  That never mingled with the broader streams,
  To roll through mighty cities, where the steams
Of vice and woe obscure the pageantry;

Nor passed where glorious summits, standing free,
  Catch the full measure of the midday gleams;
  Nor crossed the Gorges of the Evil Dreams,
And Valley of the Hopes that May not Be:

We went beside it for a little while,
  Watching its play, the ripple of its smile,
Its babble as it wandered on its way;

And lo, its course was run, and it was lost,
  As quickly as an evanescent frost,
In Death's dim Ocean that before us lay.

X.

'Tis Christmas, and we gaze with downbent head
  On something that the post has brought too late
  To reach thee, Mimma, through the narrow gate,
From one that did not know that thou art dead;

A picture book, to play with on thy bed;
  And we, who should have heard thee laugh and prate
  So busily, sit here at war with Fate,
And turn the pages silently instead.

Oh, that I knew thee playing 'neath God's eyes,
  With the small souls of all the dewy flowers
That strewed thy grave, and died at Autumn's breath;

Or with the phantom of the doll that lies
  Beside thee for Eternity's long hours,
In the dim nursery that men call Death!

XI.

How patiently they did their work of old,
  Those cowled illuminators of the cells,
  Painting their vellum from the small ribbed shells
That held the mystic carmine and the gold;

Matching God's tints in every glowing fold,
  In nimbus, wing and robe; and by their spells,
  Seizing the living glory in the wells
Of some great sunrise that His hand had scrolled.

They made immortal cherubs that retain,
  In spite of Time and his effacing trace,
Their pristine loveliness from age to age;

As Death, the cowled one, with his brush of pain,
  Illuminates some lovely baby face,
In sunrise tints on Memory's missal page.

XII.

It is the season when the elves of Spring
  Help up the first anemones that peep
  Through the young corn, and rouse from out their sleep
The pale green hellebores for March to swing;

Before they bid the field narcissus fling
  Its perfume on the furrows that they keep,
  Or let the wild red tulip's flame upleap
In honour of great April's Fairy King.

O God, to think that in a spring or two
  When she had learnt to run, we were to stroll
Among the fields where work the busy elves,

And see her pick the daffodils that strew
  Each olive-planted terrace and sweet knoll,
And the wild tulips on the grassy shelves!

XIII.

Now Florence fills her lap with buds of May,
And all, with roses, be they rich or poor,
Stream through the great cathedral's brazen door,
To get them blessed upon the Roses' Day.

Roses and yet more roses, brought away
From hundreds of wild gardens, Spring's great store,
Are blessed; but, crushed on the cathedral floor,
Lies many a bud that caught the dawn's first ray.

And so we cried: "O Priest, a bud we'll bring
For thee to bless, fresh-sprinkled by the morn,
When myriad roses crown triumphant Spring.

Late to the breeze it came, through many a thorn,
On our grey villa wall: a frail sweet thing,
Of sun and rain, of smile and sorrow born."

XIV.

O pale pressed Rose-bud in the Book of Death,
  Where thou outlastest many a perfect rose
  That strews her petals at her full life's close
Beneath November's violating breath;

Too well thou heardest what the Spring wind saith
  To the small buds of which the gods compose
  Their fatal wreaths, and what May sings to those
That shall not hear what Autumn uttereth.

When Azraël turns slowly one by one
  The leaves of his great Book, by pale gleam lit,
And sees thee whom he plucked by morn's bright sun.

Perhaps, O Rose-bud, in that silent place,
  A wistful smile, as of regret, may flit
O'er his inscrutable angelic face.

XV.

Do you remember how, with Fancy's hand,
We shaped her future as in living clay;
Modelled her life, and saw the child display
Each day fresh charm, and beauty's lines expand?

And how, before our love could understand
What Fate was working, lo, we found one day
The image finished as but God's hand may;
And it was Death's chill marble that we scann'd?

How well I see her on her cold white bed,
Between the branch of olive and the palm,
The little cross of pearls upon her breast;

And oh, the frozen beauty of the head,
The clear-cut lips, interminably calm,
The eye-lids sealed in pale seraphic rest!

XVI.

O little ship that passed us in the night,
  What sunrise wast thou bound for, as we sailed
  Our longer voyage in the wind that wailed,
Across dark waves, with few great stars in sight?

Or wast thou bound for where, in dim half light,
  The Isles that None Return From lie thick-veiled
  In their eternal mist; and shrunk and paled,
The sun of Ghostland shines from changeless height?

We had but time to hail and ask her name.
  It sounded faint, like "Persis," and we heard
"God's haven" as the port from which she came;

Bound for . . . But in the sobbing of the wind,
  And clash of waves, we failed to catch the word,
And she was gone; and we were left behind.

XVII.

Do you recall the scents, the insect whirr,
  Where we had laid her in the chestnut shade?
  How discs of sunlight through the bright leaves played
Upon the grass, as we bent over her?

How roving breezes made the bracken stir
  Beside her, while the bumble-bee, arrayed
  In brown and gold, hummed round her, and the glade
Was strewn with last year's chestnuts' prickly fur?

There in the forest's ripe and fragrant heat
  She lay and laughed, and kicked her wee bare feet,
And stretched wee hands to grasp some woodland bell;

And played her little games; and when we said
  "Cuckoo," would lift her frock, and hide her head,
Which now, God knows, is hidden but too well.

XVIII.

Lo, through the open window of the room
  That was her nursery, a small bright spark
  Comes wandering in, as falls the summer dark,
And with a measured flight explores the gloom,

As if it sought, among the things that loom
  Vague in the dusk, for some familiar mark,
  And like a light on some wee unseen bark,
It tacks in search of who knows what or whom.

I know 'tis but a fire-fly; yet its flight,
  So straight, so measured, round the empty bed,
Might be a little soul's that night sets free;

And as it nears, I feel my heart grow tight
  With something like a superstitious dread,
And watch it breathless, lest it should be she.

XIX.

What alchemy is thine, O little Child,
  Transmuting all our thoughts, thou that art dead,
  And making gold of all the dross of lead
That leaves the soul's pure crucible defiled;

A vaporous gold, which I would fain have piled
  Upon my palette, and with light brush spread
  On Death's dark background, that thy baby head
Might wear a nimbus where the angels smiled?

Thus had I given back what thou hast wrought
  In my own soul, and placed thee high among
The cherubs that are aureoled in glow;

Rimming thy brow with fine red gold of thought,
  In such fair pictures as the English tongue
Shrines in its sanctuaries while ages flow.

XX.

What essences from Idumean palm,
  What ambergris, what sacerdotal wine,
  What Arab myrrh, what spikenard would be thine,
If I could swathe thy memory in such balm!

Oh, for wrecked gold, from depths for ever calm,
  To fashion for thy name a fretted shrine;
  Oh, for strange gems, still locked in virgin mine,
To stud the pyx, where thought would bring sweet psalm!

I have but this small rosary of rhyme,—
  No rubies but heart's drops, no pearls but tears,
To lay upon the altar of thy name,

O Mimma Bella;—on the shrine that Time
  Makes ever holier for the soul, while years
Obliterate the rolls of human fame.

The Bibelot

A FOREWORD.

In the west midland of England, in the second half of the fourteenth century, lived a poet whose name no man knows to-day. A strange chance has preserved the manuscript of four of his poems. One of these, Pearl, *emblem of purity, has been the subject of much controversy as to whether it be the poetic record of a real loss in the guise of allegory, or an allegory based on an imagined grief.*

About this question there has long raged a war of words. The last argument in favor of the merely allegorical nature of Pearl *is from the able pen of Professor Schofield of Harvard. Not all scholars agree with him, and there are competent students of the fourteenth-century poems who still believe this noble poem to be the voice of a real grief in the form of an allegory. I am altogether incompetent to decide the question on scholarly grounds. When, however, feeling that Professor Schofield might be right, I read again the stanzas which appeal to those who have*

suffered as this nameless poet seems to have done, I felt anew that this poem is surely the honest gift of a personal sorrow to the sorrow of all the after years.

This ably waged contest does not greatly concern me, to whom the elegiac beauty and tenderness of the verse address themselves with more appealing force. Its simplicity and quaintness add a singular charm, and as concerns its quality as poetry there can be, I think, but one opinion.

The story is simple. It is a lament and a vision. The father falls asleep on his daughter's grave, and, dreaming, sees in heaven Marguerite — his Pearl. They talk together, and then later there is much discussion of theological matters, and, at last, a statement in verse of the apocalyptic vision of St. John.

The poem has interesting peculiarities of structure.

There are one hundred and one stanzas, each of twelve lines in three quatrains, all rhymed a b — a b. *The alliteration of an earlier day is still seen in the verse, but is less freely employed. Some one word of the final line of each stanza is repeated in the first line of the succeeding stanza.*

The rhythms of this charming poem deserve closer study. The poet uses with

delightful freedom lines of very varied length; usually they are octosyllabic.

The language of Pearl *belongs to the Middle English of the west midland counties, and even now is not, as a whole, difficult if it be read aloud so as to address the mind through the ear rather than through the eye. Few, however, will be tempted to wrestle with the original version. But there is an excellent translation into unrhymed verse by Israel Gollancz.*

For five hundred years this poem was unknown and lay hidden in the difficult writing of the fourteenth century. That this wail of grief appealed to Tennyson, even in its imperfect modern dress of unrhymed verse, may serve to excuse my effort to restore to its measures the melody and lifting wings of rhyme.

In many places I have used archaic words or retained such as now have meanings they had not in the poet's day. Thus pleasance *here means pleasure, and* courtesy *must be accepted as having more than its present meaning. I owe an apology to Mr. Gollancz for my free use of his translation of* Pearl *into modern English. Without it, I should have been incompetent to follow with reasonable accuracy the meaning of the author.*

If in some places I have taken liberties in my version, I have followed an illustrious example. I offer as my excuse that mine is not a new translation, but a rendering of the poem into modern English verse.

For convenience of reference I have numbered the stanzas of my version in the order in which I give them. I have made no use of the original stanzas 12, 30, 34, 38, 39, 47, and of those between 49 and 96. The stanzas thus left out are either such as add little of value, or such as, in the larger gap, deal with uninteresting theological or allegorical material.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

PEARL :
RENDERED INTO MODERN
ENGLISH VERSE
By
S. WEIR MITCHELL, M. D.

LINES BY LORD TENNYSON.

Prefatory to Mr. Israel Gollancz's version of *Pearl*.

We lost you — for so long a time —
True Pearl of our poetic prime!
We found you, and you gleam re-set
In Britain's lyric coronet.

This translation of PEARL *is printed in* THE BIBELOT *by permission of Dr. Mitchell who is the owner of the copyright, (1906 and 1908).*

PEARL.

I.

PEARL, for a prince's pleasance fair enow,
Right cleanly housed in gold so clear,
No orient pearl I dare avow
Was ever yet her precious peer.
So rounded, in such rare array,
So small, of smoothen comeliness,
I judged her of all jewels gay
As singly set in singleness.
Lost in mine arbour,— woe is me!
'Neath earth she lies with grass o'ergrown,
I mourn love's sweet anxiety
That spotless pearl had made my own.

II.

There have I tarried ofttimes where below
It left my sight, to seek again the joy
That once was wont to scatter all my woe,
And lift my life above the world's annoy.
About my heart do ceaseless sorrows throng;
That constant grief must ever constant be —
Yet thought I never was so sweet a song
As the still hours thither brought to me.
Ah me! what thoughts are mine! I sit and dream
Of those fair colours clad, alas! in clay.
O earth! why hast thou marred this tender theme —
My spotless pearl, that was mine own alway?

III.

Here lavish fragrance needs must spread
Where such rich waste the soil hath won;
Of blossoms white and blue and red,
No gayer rise to greet the sun.
Here nor fruit nor flower may fade,
Where passed my pearl to night of ground;
From dead grain cometh fruitful blade,
Else never wheat had harvest found.
Ever 't is good that good doth bring,
Such seemly seed it faileth not;
Here ever-fragrant flowers shall spring
O'er thee, my pearl without a spot.

IV.

That place I sweeten with gentle rhyme,
I came to, where was my arbour green,
In the high season of August time,
When corn is cut with the sickle keen.
Where pearl lay under the grassy mead,
Shadowed it was with leafage green,
Gillyflower, ginger, and gromwell seed,
And peonies powdered all between.
Fair and seemly the sight was seen,
Fairer fragrance earth knoweth not;
Worthily won it was, I ween,
Of pearl, the precious, without a spot.

V.

I gazed, my hands together pressed,
For, chilled with care of sorrow wrought,
My heart beat wildly in my breast,
Though reason sager counsel taught.
I wept my pearl in earthy cell,
And timid reason fought with doubt;
Though Christ did comfort me full well,
Weak will with woe me cast about.
Such soothing scents the air did fill
That, lulled on this rose-peopled plot,
By sleep o'ercome, I rested still
Above my pearl without a spot.

VI.

Thence sped my spirit far through space,
My body tranced upon the ground,
My soul's quick ghost by God's sure grace
Adventuring where be marvels found.
I wist not where on earth that place
With cloven cliffs, so high and sheer,
But toward a wood I set my face,
Borne whither radiant rocks appear.
Their light more golden than the sun,
A gleaming glory glinted thence:
Was never web of mortals spun
So wondrous fair to mortal sense.

VII.

The hill-sides there were brightly crowned
With crystal cliffs so clear of kind,
And wood-sides, set with boles around,
Shone blue as is the blue of Inde.
On every branch, with light between,
The leaves of quivering silver hung;
Through gleaming glades with shimmering sheen
The light fell glistering them among.
The gravel rolled upon the shore
Was precious pearls of Orient.
The sun's bright beams were pale before
That sight so fair of wonderment.

VIII.

My spirit there forgot its woe,
So wondrous were those charméd hills.
Rare flavoured fruits thereon did grow,
Fit food to cure all human ills.
In fair accord the birds flew by,
Like wingéd flames, both great and small,
Nor cittern string nor minstrelsy
Might hope to match their joyous call:
For when the air their red wings beat,
Full choir sang they rapturously.
No greater joy a man could greet
Than this to hear, and that to see.

IX.

Past all that eye of man has seen,
Past any wealth of words he hath,
The beauty of those wood-ways green,
The witchery of that wooing path.
Still on I pressed, as one who goes
Companioned by a joyous mood,
Through deepening dells where richly rose
Fair flowers by winsome breezes wooed.
Hedge-rows and marsh where wild fowl breed
I saw, and lo! a golden band —
A wonder that did all exceed —
A sunlit river cleft the strand.

X.

O marvellous river, broad and deep,
With banks that beam with beryl bright!
As music sweet the waters sweep,
Or gently murmur low and light.
From darkened depths shone jewels fine,
As gleams through glowing glass the light,
As quivering stars in the welkin shine,
When tired men sleep of a winter night.
Each little stone that stream below
Was emerald green, or sapphire gent;
From them the light did leap and glow,
To daze a man with wonderment.

XI.

Wondrous glamour of down and vale,
Wood and water and noble plain,
Did build me bliss and made me hale,
Routed sorrow and cured my pain.
Low bowed beside the stream I strayed,
With breed of joys my mind was glad;
The more I walked by mere and glade,
More strength of joy my spirit had.
Fortune fares where likes she still,
Sends she solace or evil sore,
The wight on whom she works her will
Hath ever of either more and more.

XII.

More and more, and yet far more,
I longed to see beyond the strand;
For if 't was fair on the nearer shore,
More lovelike was that farther land.
I stayed my steps,— I stood at gaze,
To find a ford I sought,— alas!
Beside the strand, as in a maze,
I won not any way to pass.
Though peril in my path might stand,
I recked not, where such treasures were;
But fresh delights were nigh at hand,
That did my wondering spirit stir.

XIII.

What wonder more did daunt my sight?
I saw beyond that mystic mere
A shining cliff of crystal bright,
With royal rays, as morning clear.
At foot there sat a little maid —
A maid of grace, and debonair;
In glistering white was she arrayed,
Well known long ere I saw her there.
More radiant than refinéd gold,
She stood in sunshine on the shore.
Long did my sight that vision hold,
And more I knew her, more and more.

XIV.

What time I saw her face so fair,
And found anew her slender grace,
Such glad delight I seemed to share
As knew I never any place,
Her tender name I longed to call,
But wonder checked my yearning heart;
Ah well it might my soul appal
To be so near — so far apart.
Uplifted was her visage sweet,
As ivory pure the tint she wore,
Heart thrilled was I her glance to meet,
And ever and ever, more and more.

XV.

Yearning had I by dread opposed.
I stood full still, I durst not call,
With eyes wide open and mouth full closed,
Like to a well-trained hawk in hall.
Hope had I for my soul's behoof;
Fear had I it might thus befall,
That she I longed for might stay aloof,
Or pass forever beyond recall.
Lo! uprose that child of grace,
Slender, small, and seemly slight,—
Rose right royal with lifted face,
A precious maid, with pearls bedight.

XVI.

When, fresh as dewy fleur-de-lys,
Adown the bank she moved toward me,
High fortuned he on earth that sees
Such peerless pearls of empery.
As white as snow her amice gleams,
Her waist a lustrous broidery
Of pearls a man might see in dreams,
But never else on earth could see.
Full ample hung her sleeves, I ween;
Twain braided they with pearles bright.
Her kirtle green alike was seen,
With pearls of price around bedight.

XVII.

A crown did wear that maiden girl
Of margerys, and none other stone.
High pinnacled, of clear white pearl,
It glowed with flowers wrought thereon.
Her head no other gem did grace;
Her hair half hid her neck from view.
In statelihood of mighty place
She stood more white than whale tooth's hue.
Her loosened locks, that gold exceed,
Flowed wandering, o'er her shoulders curled;
Though dark their gold, they scarce did need
For contrast fair her robe impearled.

XVIII.

Bravely broidered was every hem,
On sleeve and vest fair broidery lay
Of white pearls and no other gem,
And glossy shone her white array.
A wonder pearl without a taint
Lay moon-white where her bodice met;
Soul of man might falter and faint
Ere mind of man its price could set.
Tongue of man might ne'er be sure
With fitting words to tell aright
How spotless white and virgin pure
Was that rare pearl, my soul's delight.

XIX.

Decked with pearls, that precious piece
Of Heaven's make came down the strand;
My grief won wings of glad release
When that I saw her nearer stand.
None else of kin were dear as she,
And joyful then was my surprise
When seemed it she would speak to me,
And courteous bowed in woman wise.
She doffed her crown of jewels bright,
With low obeisance bending blithe.
Leave to answer that pearl of light
Made worth it well to be alive.

XX.

"O Pearl, so gay with pearls," quoth I,—
"O Pearl that in my loneliness
Art yearned for when at night I lie
Sole comrade of my own distress,—
Since over thee the grasses twine,
No love to mine with love replies.
May liking, love, and joy be thine,—
The strifeless bourne of Paradise.
Such weird as brought thee hither here,
With plight of sorrow hath me undone;
Now are we twayned that were so dear,
And in love's life were but as one."

XXI.

High crowned with pearls of Orient,
Looked up at me with fair blue eyes
That gracious maid with grave intent,
And sober spake in courtly wise.
"Sir, the tale is by half mistold
To say thy pearl is all perdue,
That a comely coffer in guard doth hold,
In flowered gardens, gay to view,
Where she may ever dwell and play,
Where sin nor sorrow come never near.
Safe should such treasury seem alway
If thou didst love thy jewel dear.

XXII.

"If for a jewel lost, fair Sir,
A jewel dear thou art in grief,
Thy care filled soul doth surely err,
O'ermastered by a loss so brief,
For that thou lost was but a rose
That flowered and failed as doth its kind;
In heaven's casket now it glows,
A pearl of price, as thou shalt find."
Lo, thou hast called thy weird a thief,
That nought from thee has taken quite.
To blame release from earthly grief
Is not to love thy Pearl aright."

XXIII.

A jewel came to me, this guest,
With jewelled words of gentilesse.
"Thy words," quoth I, "O blissful best,
Have charmed away my dire distress.
To be excused I make request;
I thought my Pearlé's days were done;
Now that I find her here confessed
Fain would I stray with her I won
Through woodland ways and ever hear
Her songs of praise for bliss brought near.
Ah, were I with her past the mere
What joy were mine, O jewel dear!"

XXIV.

"Gentle Sir," said the maiden gem,
"Why do men jest? Distraught ye be.
Three words hast said, and all of them
Forsooth are folly,— yea, all the three.
Thou knowest not what thy words may mean;
Quick words thy tardy wits outfly.
Dost surely think I here am seen
Because thou seest with mortal eye.
Thou sayest, too, that thou, alas!
May bide with me in this domain.
The way this stream to freely pass
No living wight may know to gain.

XXV.

"Small praise that man would have of me
Who trusts the wisdom of the eye.
Much to be blamed and graceless he
That thinks the Lord could speak a lie,—
Our Lord who promised thy life to raise,
Though fortune bid thy body die!
Ye read his words in crooked ways
To trust alone what sees the eye:
And that is a fault of haughtiness
Doth ill a righteous man beseem,
To trow no tale has worthiness
Unless his reason so may deem.

XXVI.

"Think now thyself if it be well
Of God such words as thine to say.
Dost think in this fair land to dwell?
Methinks 't were better his leave to pray:
And yet might fail thine eager quest.
Ere thou shalt pass that watery way
Thou first must find another rest,
And cold must lie thy corse in clay;
For it was marred in Paradise,
Where our yore-father wrought it loss,—
Through dreary death thy journey lies
Ere God will give thee leave to cross.

XXVII.

"Thou thinkest sorrow naught but dole.
Why dost thou make this vain pretence?
For lesser loss the wailing soul
May lose far more than he laments.
Shouldst rather hold thee blessed by it,
And love thy God in weal and woe,
For anger helpeth thee no whit,
And man must bear what all must know.
Though thou shouldst prance as any doe,
And fret and chafe in mad unrest,
Thou canst not any further go,—
Abide thou must what He thinks best."

XXVIII.

And wilt thou doom me, gentle maid,
To dole again, when surely won
I have anew what far had strayed;
To lose it ere my words be done;
To meet and miss what I would keep,
Ah, woe were mine, and mortal pain.
To love is but to learn to weep;
To love is but to lose again.
Now reck I nought of life's decline,
Nor exile, nor of lonely days;
If never more my Pearl is mine
Enduring dole is mine always.

XXIX.

Then spake I to that demoiselle —
"Let not my Lord be wroth with me.
As from a spring quick waters well,
Leaps forth my speech so wild and free.
My lonely heart is sorrow-scarred,
In misericorde of Christ I rest,
Rebuke me not with words so hard,
Forlorn am I, adored and best.
Thy kindly comfort me afford
With piteous thinking upon this —
Of care and me ye made accord
Who once were ground of all my bliss.

XXX.

"Thou hast been both my bale and bliss,
But greater is the bale I moan.
On every field my pearl I miss,
I wist not where my pearl has flown.
With clearer sight is sorrow eased.
Ere parting came we were at one.
Forbid it, God, we be displeased,
Though meet we not beneath the sun.
Though tender sweet thy courtesy,
I am but earth, my joy is gone;
Gone every hope of help for me
Save mercy of Christ, Marie, and John.

XXXI.

"I see thee with thy comrade, joy.
Ah, think of me when thou art glad;
Sad hours my ageing life annoy,
A lonely man bereft and sad.
But now, within thy presence here
I fain would bide, and patient wait
That ye may tell — ah, pearl most dear —
What life ye have both early and late.
Full glad am I that thy estate
Is changed to worship and to weal;
Since thou hast passed to lofty state —
There lies the only joy I feel."

XXXII.

"To know if here the life is led
Be glad, will that thy grief assuage?
Thou knowest when thy pearl lay dead
Full young was I, of tender age.
Lo! I am bride of Christ the Lamb!
Through sacred Godhead wedded sure;
A crownéd queen of bliss I am,
Through days that shall for aye endure.
Who have his love do hold in fee
This heritage. I am his alone;
His priceless glory is to me
The source of every joy I own."

XXXIII.

"Ah, Pearl of bliss, can this be true
Let not my error bid me rue.
Art thou the Queen of heaven's blue
That all the world does honour to?
We worship her, the spring of grace,
Who bare a Child of virgin flower.
Ah, none can take her crown and place,
That pass her not in worth and power.
For singleness of gentilesse
We call her phenix of Araby,—
The bird none match in stateliness,
Like to that Queen of Courtesy."

XXXIV.

"Ay, Queen of Courtesy!" she said;
And lowly knelt and hid her face.
"Matchless mother and merriest maid!
Blest beginner of all our grace."
Then rose she up and 'gan to speak,
And looked at me across the space.
"Though many find what here they seek,
None here may take another's place.
The heavens do her empire make,
Of earth and hell the Queen is she;
Her heritage may no one take,
For she is Queen of Courtesy."

XXXV.

"Yea, courtesy, I well believe,
And charity do here belong.
Let not my words thy goodness grieve —
To me thy speech still seemeth wrong.
Thyself to set so high in heaven
As queen to make of one so young —
What honour more might him be given
That in the world by grief was wrung,
And bought his bliss by years of bale —
Yea, lived in penance wearily?
No lesser honour him could fail
Than King be crowned by courtesy.

XXXVI.

"Such courtesy too free appears,
If that be sooth which thou dost say.
On earth were thine but two brief years,
Never couldst thou God please or pray,
Knew never neither pater nor creed,—
But queen outright on thy death day,—
I may not trow it, so God me speed,
That God should rule so wrong a way.
Countess or demoiselle, par ma fay,
Were fair to be in heaven's estate,
Or else a lady of less array,—
But queen! it were too high a fate."

XXXVII.

"His goodness hath nor mete nor bound,"
Said then to me this worthsome wight;
"For all is truth where he is found,
Nought can he do but that is right.
This Matthew doth for thee express,
Writ clear in gospel sooth aright,
Ensampled plain for easy guess,
A parable of heavenly light."
"My realm," saith Christ, "is like, on high,
A lord's that had a vineyard fair,
When lo! the vintage time was nigh,
And men must to his vines repair.

XXXVIII.

"Right well his men the season know,
So up betimes that lord arose
To send them where his vines did grow,
And unto some did there propose
A penny a day to be their gain.
With this accord forthwith they go,
And toil and labour with honest pain,
And prune and carry, go to and fro.
At noon this lord the market seeks,
And finds men standing idle here.
'Why stand ye idle?' thus he speaks.
'Now know ye not the time of year?'

XXXIX.

" 'We hither came ere day begun,'
This was their answer, one and all.
'Here have we stood since rose the sun,
And no man yet on us doth call.'
'Go to my vineyard, work aright,
And rest ye sure,' that lord did say,
'What wages fair ye earn by night,
In very sooth I will surely pay.'
Into his vines they went and wrought,
The while he came, and came again,
And new men into his vineyard brought,
Until the day was on the wane.

XL.

"At close of day, at evensong,
An hour before the sun had fled,
He saw there idle men and strong,
And unto them he gently said:
'Why stand ye idle all day long?'
'No man,' they said, 'has come to hire.'
'Go to my vines, ye yoemen strong,
And work your best, as I desire.'
Soon the world grew dusk and gray,
The sun went down, it waxéd late;
He summoned them to take their pay —
The hour had come for which they wait.

XLI.

"That lord well knew the time of day,
And bade his steward pay them all.
'Give every man his proper pay;
And that no blame on me may fall,
Set ye all of them in a row,
And give alike a penny to each.
Begin with him that stands most low,
Until the first his wage shall reach.'
Thereon the first did quick complain:
'My lord, we toiled full long and sore;
These last have had but little pain,
Our wage should justly be far more.'

XLII.

"Then said this lord, 'In sooth, I try
To use mine own as seemeth meet.
Why turn on me an evil eye,
Who justice seek and no man cheat?'
Quoth Christ, 'I now do thus decree,
The first shall be the last, and those
Who latest came the first shall be,—
Of many called but few be chose.'
Thus do poor men win their way,
Though late they come and low their state;
If brief has been their labour day,
The more of grace doth them await.

XLIII.

"More bliss have I, and joy herein
Of ladyship, and life's delight,
Than all the men on earth might win
If all they sought were theirs by right.
Although the night was nigh at hand
When came I to the vines at even,
Among the first God bade me stand,
And fullest wage to me was given.
Yet others waited there in vain,
Who toiled and sweated long of yore,
And still no wage repaid their pain,
And may not for a year or more."

XLIV.

The Lamb's delight none doubted there.
Though seemed he hurt and wounded sore,
Yet glorious glad his glances were,
And nought of pain his semblance bore.
I looked among his radiant host,
Quick with eternal life,— and lo!
I saw my pearle's gentle ghost,
I loved and lost so long ago.
Lord! much of mirth that maiden made
Among her peers, so pure and white.
I yearned to cross — all unafraid,
So longed my love — so dear the sight.

XLV.

Delight held captive eye and ear;
My mortal mind toward madness drave,
I would be there where stayed my dear,
Beyond that river's mystic wave.
Methought that none would do so ill
As me to halt, if now I tried;
And if at start none checked my will,
Fain would I venture though I died.
Anon, from bold resolve I fell
When I would take that peril's chance;
In that rash mood I dare not dwell —
Not so my Prince's fair pleasance.

XLVI.

It pleased not God that I come near,
Or think to cross that guarding mere,
Aghast I stood, alone with fear —
Alone, and she no longer here.
For, as I stood beside the stream,
I wakened in that arbour's shade.
Gone was the gladness of my dream!
My head was on that hillock laid
Where over her the roses grow.
Heartsore I lay upon the sod,
And to myself I murmured low:
"Blest be my maid in care of God."

XLVII.

So hard it was to drift away
From that fair region all too soon,
From sights so gallant, blithe and gay,
That weak with hurt I seemed to swoon,
And ruefully my head I bowed.
"O Pearl," said I, "of rare renown!
O, news of joy!" I cried aloud,
"In this glad vision sent me down.
And if thy tale in sooth be so,
And thou art clad in joy's delight,
Well am I in this home of woe,
Since thou hast pleased the Prince's sight."

XLVIII.

If to God's pleasure I had but bent,
And craved no more than man is given,
And held me humble, with this content,
As prayed that pearl in goodness thriven,—
Then by God's grace I were less amiss,
More mysteries my soul had won;
But man doth have more greed of bliss
Than life may give ere life be done.
Therefore too soon my joy was riven,
And I exiled from realms eterne.
Lord! mad are they with thee have striven,
For what doth not thy pleasure earn!

XLIX.

To win the Prince's love aright
For Christen men is an easy end.
Yea, I have found him, by day and night,
A God, a Lord, full firm a friend.
Befell me this on that mound's green sod,—
For sorrow of Pearl there lay I prone,
And this my jewel gave o'er to God,
In Christ's dear blessing and eke mine own.
Christ, that in form of bread and wine,
The priest doth show, wherein God grants
To us his servants here a sign
That we be pearls of his pleasance.

AN AFTERWORD.

By S. WEIR MITCHELL.

A LITTLE grave, a nameless man's distress,
And lo! a wail of lyric tenderness,
Unheard, unseen for half a thousand years,
Asks from love's equal loss the praise of tears.

The Bibelot

IT is sometimes interesting to observe the curious lack of really sympathetic insight offered by critics who, so to speak, were first on the ground! About all that a very competent reviewer could discover in An Italian Garden *when first published was its unbearable note "of human weariness and want." Nevertheless we have no hesitation in saying, twenty years later, that of Agnes Mary Robinson's verse this is the one book most worth while,—the one we would least care to cancel from the list.*

In making selections from what in our opinion is her loveliest volume it is with intent to reawaken interest not only in An Italian Garden *but, if it be possible, in the complete works of this variously gifted Englishwoman.*[1] *From the songs we have chosen to reprint there emerges an indefinable vibration as of viol music lingering in the air foretelling and forewarning of passion that inevitably ends in "dust and ashes." It is the same persistent note that voices itself in* A Toccata of Galuppi's *and in the almost unknown little masterpiece,*

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[1] *See Bibliographical Note.*

In a Gondola, *by a still lesser known "Aureolus Paracelsus." The sorrow that comes to each and all is so exquisitely phrased in* Tuscan Cypress: *it is in this lost land that we find ourselves,—the realm of what once was near and now is distant:*

"Sea, marsh, and sun; and 'tis something less than fair,
And yet, my dear, we were so happy there."

In the hush of an August afternoon, or beneath the moonrise and stargleams of a summer's night these songs breathe of "dreams forgotten and unrequited loves, of hopes trodden in the dust;" and yet, such is their potent necromancy, they remind us at the same instant of a time when life was *at its first fine careless rapture, before love had come to assume the faded colours of tapestry adorning some long sealed secret chamber of the heart.*

FOR SEPTEMBER:

SIMEON SOLOMON:
NOTES ON HIS "VISION OF LOVE"
AND OTHER STUDIES
BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

SONGS FROM AN ITALIAN GARDEN

By

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

What shall we do, my dear, with dying roses?
Shut them in weighty tomes where none will look
—To wonder when the unfrequent page uncloses
Who shut the wither'd blossoms in the book?—

What shall we do, my dear, with things that perish,
Memory, roses, love we feel and cherish?

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

THE VISION.

SOMETIMES when I sit musing all alone
The sick diversity of human things,
Into my soul, I know not how, there springs
The vision of a world unlike our own.

O stable Zion, perfect, endless, one,
Why hauntest thou a soul that hath no wings?
I look on thee as men on mirage springs,
Knowing the desert bears but sand and stone.

Yet as a passing mirror in the street
Flashes a glimpse of gardens out of range
Through some poor sick-room open to the heat,
So, in a world of doubt and death and change,
The vision of eternity is sweet,
The vision of eternity is strange.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

TUSCAN CYPRESS.

(SIXTEEN RISPETTI.)

I.

My mother bore me 'neath the streaming moon,
And all the enchanted light is in my soul.
I have no place amid the happy noon,
I have no shadow there nor aureole.

Ah, lonely whiteness in a clouded sky,
You are alone, nor less alone am I;
Ah, moon, that makest all the roses grey,
The roses I behold are wan as they!

II.

What good is there, Ah me, what good in Love?
Since, even if you love me, we must part;
And since for either, an you cared enough,
There's but division and a broken heart?

And yet, God knows, to hear you say: My Dear!
I would lie down and stretch me on the bier.
And yet would I, to hear you say: My own!
With mine own hands drag down the burial stone.

III.

I love you more than any words can say,
  And yet you do not feel I love you so;
And slowly I am dying day by day,—
  You look at me, and yet you do not know.

You look at me, and yet you do not fear:
You do not see the mourners with the bier.
You answer when I speak and wish me well,
And still you do not hear the passing bell.

IV.

O Love, O Love, come over the sea, come here,
  Come back and kiss me once when I am dead!
Come back and lay a rose upon my bier,
  Come, light the tapers at my feet and head.

Come back and kiss me once upon the eyes,
So I, being dead, shall dream of Paradise;
Come, kneel beside me once and say a prayer,
So shall my soul be happy anywhere.

V.

I sowed the field of Love with many seeds,
With many sails I sailed before the blast,
And all my crop is only bitter weeds;
My sails are torn, the winds have split the mast.

All of the winds have torn my sails and shattered,
All of the winds have blown my seed and scattered,
All of the storms have burst on my endeavour,—
So let me sleep at last and sleep for ever.

VI.

I am so pale to-night, so mere a ghost,
Ah, what, to-morrow, shall my spirit be?
No living angel of the heavenly host,
No happy soul, blithe in eternity.

Oh, I shall wander on beneath the moon,
A lonely phantom seeking for you, soon;
A wandering ghost, seeking you timidly,
Whom you will tremble, dear, and start to see!

VII.

When I am dead and I am quite forgot,
What care I if my spirit lives or dies?
To walk with angels in a grassy plot,
And pluck the lilies grown in Paradise?

Ah, no — the heaven of all my heart has been
To hear your voice and catch the sighs between.
Ah, no — the better heaven I fain would give,
But in a cranny of your soul to live.

VIII.

Ah me, you well might wait a little while,
And not forget me, Sweet, until I die!
I had a home, a little distant isle,
With shadowy trees and tender misty sky.

I had a home! It was less dear than thou,
And I forgot, as you forget me now.
I had a home, more dear than I could tell,
And I forgot, but now remember well.

IX.

Love me to-day and think not on to-morrow,
  Come, take my hands, and lead me out of doors,
There in the fields let us forget our sorrow,
  Talking of Venice and Ionian shores; —

Talking of all the seas innumerable
Where we will sail and sing when I am well;
Talking of Indian roses gold and red,
Which we will plait in wreaths — when I am dead.

X.

There is a Siren in the middle sea
  Sings all day long and wreathes her pallid hair,
Seven years you sail, and seven ceaselessly,
  From any port ere you adventure there.

Thither we'll go, and thither sail away
Out of the world, to hear the Siren play;
Thither we'll go and hide among her tresses,
Since all the world is savage wildernesses.

XI.

Tell me a story, dear, that is not true,
  Strange as a vision, full of splendid things;
Here will I lie and dream it is not you,
  And dream it is a mocking bird that sings.

For if I find your voice in any part,
Even the sound of it will break my heart;
For if you speak of us and of our love,
I faint and die to feel the thrill thereof.

XII.

Let us forget we ever loved each other much,
  Let us forget we ever have to part,
Let us forget that any look or touch
  Once let in either to the other's heart.

Only we'll sit upon the daisied grass
And hear the larks and see the swallows pass;
Only we'll live awhile, as children play,
Without to-morrow, without yesterday.

XIII.

Far, far away and in the middle sea,
So still I dream, although the dream is vain,
There lies a valley full of rest for me,
Where I shall live and you shall love again.

O ships that sail, O masts against the sky,
Will you not stop awhile in passing by?
O prayers that hope, O faith that never knew,
Will you not take me on to heaven with you?

XIV.

Flower of the Cypress, little bitter bloom,
You are the only blossom left to gather;
I never prized you, grown amid the gloom,
But well you last, though all the others wither.

Flower of the Cypress, I will bind a crown
Tight round my brows to still these fancies down.
Flower of the Cypress, I will tie a wreath
Tight round my breast to kill the heart beneath.

XV.

Ah, Love, I cannot die, I cannot go
  Down in the dark and leave you all alone,
Ah, hold me fast, safe in the warmth I know,
  And never shut me underneath a stone.

Dead in the grave! And I can never hear
If you are ill or if you miss me, dear.
Dead, oh my God! and you may need me yet,
While I shall sleep, while I — while I — forget!

XVI.

Come away Sorrow, Sorrow come away —
  Let us go sit in some cool, shadowy place;
There shall you sing and hush me all the day,
  While I will dream about my lover's face.

Hush me, O Sorrow, like a babe to sleep,
Then close the lids above mine eyes that weep;
Rock me, O Sorrow, like a babe in pain,
Nor, when I slumber, wake me up again.

TUSCAN OLIVES.

(SEVEN RISPETTI.)

I.

THE colour of the olives who shall say?
In winter on the yellow earth they're blue,
A wind can change the green to white or grey,
But they are olives still in every hue;

But they are olives always, green or white,
As love is love in torment or delight;
But they are olives, ruffled or at rest,
As love is always love in tears or jest.

II.

We walked along the terraced olive-yard,
And talked together till we lost the way;
We met a peasant, bent with age and hard,
Bruising the grape-skins in a vase of clay;

Bruising the grape-skins for the second wine,
We did not drink, and left him, Love of mine;
Bruising the grapes already bruised enough:
He had his meagre wine, and we our love.

III.

We climbed one morning to the sunny height
  Where chestnuts grow no more and olives grow;
Far-off the circling mountains cinder-white,
  The yellow river and the gorge below.

"Turn round," you said, O flower of Paradise;
I did not turn, I looked upon your eyes.
"Turn round," you said, "turn round and see the view!"
I did not turn, my Love, I looked at you.

IV.

How hot it was! Across the white-hot wall
  Pale olives stretch towards the blazing street;
You broke a branch, you never spoke at all,
  But gave it me to fan with in the heat;

You gave it me without a sign or word,
And yet, my dear, I think you knew I heard.
You gave it me without a word or sign:
Under the olives first I called you mine.

V.

At Lucca, for the autumn festival,
The streets are tulip-gay; but you and I
Forgot them, seeing over church and wall
Guinigi's tower soar i' the black-blue sky;

A stem of delicate rose against the blue;
And on the top two lonely olives grew,
Crowning the tower, far from the hills, alone;
As on our risen love our lives are grown.

VI.

Who would have thought we should stand again together,
Here, with the convent a frown of towers above us;
Here, mid the sere-wooded hills and wintry weather;
Here, where the olives bend down and seem to love us;

Here, where the fruit-laden olives half remember
All that began in their shadow last November;
Here, where we knew we must part, must part and sever;
Here, where we know we shall love for aye and ever.

VII.

Reach up and pluck a branch, and give it me,
  That I may hang it in my Northern room,
That I may find it there, and wake and see
  — Not you! not you! — dead leaves and wintry gloom.

O senseless olives, wherefore should I take
Your leaves to balm a heart that can but ache?
Why should I take you hence, that can but show
How much is left behind? I do not know.

REMEMBRANCE: A SONNET.

O NIGHT of death, O night that bringest all,
Night full of dreams and large with promises,
O night that holdest on thy shadowy knees
Sleep for all fevers, hope for every thrall;
Bring thou to her for whom I wake and call,
Bring her when I am dead, for memories,
Our vanished love and all our vanished ease;
And I shall live again beneath the pall!

Then let my face, pale as a waning moon,
Rise on thy dark and be again as dear;
Let my dead voice find its forgotten tune
And strike again as sweetly in her ear,
As when, upon my lips, one far-off June,
Thy name — O Death — she could not brook to hear!

SONNET.

God sent a poet to reform His earth,
But when he came and found it cold and poor,
Harsh and unlovely, where each prosperous boor
Held poets light for all their heavenly birth,
He thought — Myself can make one better worth
The living in than this — full of old lore,
Music and light and love, where Saints adore
And Angels, all within mine own soul's girth.

But when at last he came to die, his soul
Saw earth (flying past to Heaven) with new love,
And all the unused passion in him cried:
O God, your Heaven I know and weary of.
Give me this world to work in and make whole,
God spoke: Therein, fool, thou hast lived and died!

ETRUSCAN TOMBS.

I.

To think the face we love shall ever die,
And be the indifferent earth, and know us not!
To think that one of us shall live to cry
On one long buried in a distant spot!

O wise Etruscans, faded in the night
Yourselves, with scarce a rose-leaf on your trace,
You kept the ashes of the dead in sight,
And shaped the vase to seem the vanished face.

But, O my Love, my life is such an urn
That tender memories mould with constant touch,
Until the dust and earth of it they turn
To your dear image that I love so much:

A sacred urn, filled with the sacred past,
That shall recall you while the clay shall last.

II.

These cinerary urns with human head
And human arms that dangle at their sides,
The earliest potters made them for their dead,
To keep the mother's ashes or the bride's.

O rude attempt of some long-spent despair —
With symbol and with emblem discontent —
To keep the dead alive and as they were,
The actual features and the glance that went!

The anguish of your art was not in vain,
For lo, upon these alien shelves removed
The sad immortal images remain,
And show that once they lived and once you loved.

But oh, when I am dead may none for me
Invoke so drear an immortality!

III.

Beneath the branches of the olive yard
  Are roots where cyclamen and violet grow;
Beneath the roots the earth is deep and hard,
  And there a king was buried long ago.

The peasants digging deeply in the mould
  Cast up the autumn soil about the place,
And saw a gleam of unexpected gold,
  And underneath the earth a living face.

With sleeping lids and rosy lips he lay
  Among the wreaths and gems that mark the king
One moment; then a little dust and clay
  Fell shrivelled over wreath and urn and ring.

A carven slab recalls his name and deeds,
Writ in a language no man living reads.

IV.

Here lies the tablet graven in the past,
  Clear-charactered and firm and fresh of line.
See, not a word is gone; and yet how fast
  The secret no man living may divine!

What did he choose for witness in the grave?
  A record of his glory on the earth?
The wail of friends? The Pæans of the brave?
  The sacred promise of the second birth!

The tombs of ancient Greeks in Sicily
  Are sown with slender discs of graven gold
Filled with the praise of Death: "Thrice happy he
  Wrapt in the milk-soft sleep of dreams untold!"

They sleep their patient sleep in altered lands,
The golden promise in their fleshless hands.

A RIFIORITA.

FLOWERS in the wall!
How could he leave the house where he was born?
(*We children played together*
In warm or wintry weather)
How could he leave the house where he was born?
I count the stones for him and love them all.
(*We children played together*
In warm or wintry weather).

Flowers on the stone!
The Siren loves the sea, but I the Past!
(*We children played together*
In warm or wintry weather)
The Siren loves the sea, but I the Past!
Upon my rock I sing alone, alone,—
(*We children played together*
In warm or wintry weather).

STREWINGS.

STROW poppy buds about my quiet head
And pansies on mine eyes,
And rose-leaves on the lips that were so red
Before they blanched with sighs.

Let gilly-flowers breathe their spicy breath
Under my tired feet,
But do not mock the heart that starved to death
With aught of fresh or sweet!

TEMPLE GARLANDS.

THERE is a temple in my heart
Where moth or rust can never come,
A temple swept and set apart,
To make my soul a home.

And round about the doors of it
Hang garlands that forever last,
That gathered once are always sweet;
The roses of the Past!

LOVE WITHOUT WINGS.

EIGHT SONGS.

I.

I THOUGHT: no more the worst endures!
I die, I end the strife,—
You swiftly took my hands in yours
And drew me back to life!

II.

We sat when shadows darken,
And let the shadows be;
Each was a soul to hearken,
Devoid of eyes to see.

You came at dusk to find me;
I knew you well enough . . .
O Lights that dazzle and blind me—
It is no friend, but Love!

III.

How is it possible
You should forget me,
Leave me for ever
And never regret me!

I was the soul of you,
Past Love or Loathing,
Lost in the whole of you . . .
Now, am I nothing?

IV.

The fallen oak still keeps its yellow leaves
  But all its growth is o'er!
So, at your name, my heart still beats and grieves,
  Although I love no more.

V.

And so I shall meet you
  Again, my dear
How shall I greet you?
  What shall I hear?

I, you forgot!
  (But who shall say
You loved me not
  Yesterday?)

VI.

Ah me, do you remember still
  The garden where we strolled together,
The empty groves, the little hill
  Starred o'er with pale Italian heather?

And you to me said never a word,
  Nor I a single word to you,
And yet how sweet a thing was heard,
  Resolved, abandoned, by us two!

VII.

I know you love me not . . . I do not love you;
Only at dead of night
I smile a little, softly dreaming of you
Until the dawn is bright.

I love you not; you love me not; I know it!
But when the day is long
I haunt you like the magic of a poet,
And charm you like a song.

VIII.

O Death of things that are, Eternity
Of things that seem;
Of all the happy past remains to me,
To-day, a dream!

Long blessèd days of love and wakening thought,
All, all are dead;
Nothing endures we did, nothing we wrought,
Nothing we said.

But once I dreamed I sat and sang with you
On Ida hill.
There, in the echoes of my life, we two
Are singing still.

STORNELLI AND STRAMBOTTI.

I.

FLOWER of the clove!
Red rose the morning, and my heart was free;
Red sets the sun and, see, I die of Love!

* * * * *

O mandolines that thrill the moonlit street,
O lemon flowers so faint and freshly blown,
O seas that lap a solemn music sweet
Through all the pallid night against the stone,
O lovers tramping past with happy feet,
O heart that hast a memory of thine own —
For Mercy's sake no more, no more repeat
The word it is so hard to hear alone!

* * * * *

Flower of the flax!
I cannot spin to-night; my heart is full.
Quick go the fingers where the lover lacks!

II.

Rosemary leaves!
She who remembers cannot love again;
She who remembers sits at home and grieves.

* * * * *

Love is a bird that breaks its voice with singing,
Love is a rose blown open till it fall,
Love is a bee that dies of its own stinging,
And Love the tinsel cross upon a pall.
Love is the Siren, towards a quicksand bringing
Enchanted fishermen that hear her call.
Love is a broken heart, — Farewell, — the wringing
Of dying hands. Ah, do not love at all!

* * * * *

Flower of a flower!
My heart alone may guess my lover's name,
Or where we met or when the happiest hour!

TORRENTS.

I KNOW that if our lives could meet
  Like torrents in a sudden tide,
Our souls should send their shining sheet
  Of waters far and wide.

But, ah! my dear, the springs of mine
  Have never yet begun to flow —
And yours, that were so full and fine,
  Ran dry so long ago!

SEMITONES.

WE did not dream, my Heart, and yet
  With what a pang we woke at last!
We were not happy in the past
It is so bitter to forget.

We did not hope, my Soul, for Heaven;
  Yet now the hour of death is nigh;
  How hard, how strange it is to die
Like leaves along the tempest driven.

MUSIC.

BEFORE the dawn is yet the day
I lie and dream so deep,
So drowsy-deep I cannot say
If yet I wake or sleep.

But in my dream a tune there is,
And rings so fresh and sweet
That I would rather die than miss
The utmost end of it.

And yet I know not an it be
Some music in the lane,
Or but a song that rose with me
From sleep, to sink again.

And so, alas, and even so
I waste my life away;
Nor if the tune be real I know,
Or but a dream astray.

ROSA ROSARUM.

GIVE me, O friend, the secret of thy heart
Safe in my breast to hide,
So that the leagues which keep our lives apart
May not our souls divide.

Give me the secret of thy life to lay
Asleep within my own,
Nor dream that it shall mock thee any day
By any sign or tone.

Nay, as in walking through some convent-close,
Passing beside a well,
Oft have we thrown a red and scented rose
To watch it as it fell;

Knowing that never more the rose shall rise
To shame us, being dead;
Watching it spin and dwindle till it lies
At rest, a speck of red —

Thus, I beseech thee, down the silent deep
And darkness of my heart,
Cast thou a rose; give me a rose to keep,
My friend, before we part.

For, as thou passest down thy garden-ways,
  Many a blossom there
Groweth for thee: lilies and laden bays,
  And rose and lavender.

But down the darkling well one only rose
  In all the year is shed;
And o'er that chill and secret wave it throws
  A sudden dawn of red.

EPILOGUE.

In the cup of life, 'tis true,
Dwells a draught of bitter dew —

Disenchantment, sorrow, pain,
Hunger that no bread can still,
Dreary dawns that dawn in vain,
Hopes that torture, joys that kill.

Yet no other cup I know
Where such radiant waters glow:

It contains the song of birds,
And the shining of the sun;
And the sweet unspoken words
We have dreamed of, every one;

Love of women, minds of men. —
— Take the cup, nor break it, then.

Her "first editions" in verse make up a fairly long list:

1. A Handful of Honeysuckle. London. 1878.

2. The Crowned Hippolytus translated from Euripides, with new poems. London. 1881. The copy we own bears the following inscription: *"To my friend, P. B. Marston, who has heard all these verses and helped me with them, long ago. April 20th, '81."* The dedication reads: "To my friend J. A. Symonds."

3. The New Arcadia and Other Poems. London. 1884. Dedicated to Vernon Lee.

4. An Italian Garden: A Book of Songs. London. 1886. Reprinted in *The Bibelot Series* (with five later poems). Portland, Maine. 1897.

5. Songs, Ballads, and a Garden Play. London. 1888.

6. Lyrics Selected from the Works of A. Mary F. Robinson. (Cameo Series.) London. 1891.

7. Retrospect and Other Poems. (Cameo Series.) London. 1893.

8. The Collected Poems, Lyrical and Narrative, of A. Mary F. Robinson (Madame Duclaux) with a Preface and Portrait. London, 1902. The portrait is after a drawing by Miss Lisa Stillman. The little four-page preface is intensely *intime*.

9. The Return to Nature: Songs and Symbols. [By] Mary Duclaux (A. Mary F. Robinson). Wrappers. London. 1904.

Her prose works are as follows:

1. Emily Brontë, (Famous Women Series). 1883.

2. Arden: A Novel. 1883.

3. Margaret of Angoulême. 1885.

4. The End of the Middle Ages: Essays and Questions in History. 1888.

5. The Life of Ernest Renan. 1897.

6. A Mediæval Garland. [Written in French.] Translated into English by May Tomlinson. 8vo. London. 1897.

7. The Fields of France: Little Essays in Descriptive Sociology. 1903.

The Bibelot

EXPLORERS *in the realm of rare artistic personality will seldom discover a choicer example of the submerged man of genius than when they come to read this essay on Simeon Solomon. Why it has suffered extinction at the instance of its writer Mr. Swinburne alone can answer. For us it suffices, in making what may well be final levy on the pages of* The Dark Blue *magazine, that we* are *enabled to reprint it for the first time after thirty-seven years; especially as at present there would seem to be a revival of interest in the almost forgotten subject of the uncrowned laureate's* éloge.

That the name of Simeon Solomon does not appear in the revised Index to the Dictionary of National Biography *merely proves how speedily a "revised" compilation of any sort itself requires revision. Let no one think that such omission is a determinant of any man's status, least of all the status of one so very like Blake in the world's neglect,—so very unlike Blake in the malign vicissitudes which brought him to his end and have contributed to his effacement as an artist.*

It is perhaps not one of the least of Oscar Wilde's many-sided appreciations that "he seems to have watched with poignant interest the career of Solomon."[1] *One may regret that* Intentions *is shorn of an additional chapter. If only creator of* "Love dying from the breath of Lust, Antinous, *and drawings with titles from the Latin Vulgate" had been chosen as a theme by the one who best of all could have interpreted aright the heart of the mystery! The chapter was never written, — never even thought about so far as we know — but what a discourse we have lost!*

Simeon Solomon was born in 1841, dying in London in 1905. As Mr. Robert Ross puts case: "The news of the inquest on his body at the beginning of the year came almost as a surprise, for, as was said of a contemporary, he died years before his death."[2] *As long ago as the first appearance of* The Roundabout Papers *he had been praised by Thackeray. To-day we are on the verge of finding out for ourselves what manner of genius he was when*

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1 *See* The Life of Oscar Wilde. By R. H. Sherard, *p. 179.* (*New York, Mitchell Kennerley, 1906.*)

2 *See* Academy *for December 23, 1905.*

the frailties of his life are set aside for the beauty of the Spirit which endures.[3]

Coming directly to what Solomon achieved as a writer,—a single privately printed volume[4]*—it will probably remain for the*

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3 *See* King Solomon and the Fair Sheelainite: A Poetic Idyl Arranged in Sequence by Julia Ellsworth Ford. With Illustrations after drawings by Simeon Solomon. *12mo. New York, 1908. These seven pencil drawings were done at the age of seventeen. There is also a series to the Book of Ruth. An illustrated account of Solomon's life and works by Mrs. Ford is in preparation.*

Three half-tone reproductions of Dawn, Amor Sacramentum, *and* Love in Autumn *are given in* The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters, Their Associates and Successors. By Percy Bate. *Second edition. 8vo. London, 1901.*

"The charming little Love in Autumn *is an exquisite example of his allegory. The shuddering figure and woful face of the god tell their own pathetic tale, as, buffeted by the chilly winds that mark the coming of winter and death, his radiant plumes bedraggled and useless, he wanders along the rocky path strewn with the fallen leaves that portend decay." P. 64.*

This interesting book is a marvellous example of bad workmanship, the leaves being glued into the cover, neither folded nor stitched so that it comes to pieces at the first opening!

4 A Vision of Love | revealed in Sleep | [*Motto:* Until the day break | and the shadows flee away | Song of Songs]. *By* | *Simeon Solomon.* | *London* | *Printed for the Author* | *To be had also of F. S. Ellis, 33 King Street, Covent Garden* | *1871.*

many, and maybe for the few as well, a curious book that "ought to be republished along with Mr. Swinburne's noble eulogy." This letter, a labour of love, we now offer our readers. Whether or not the Vision *itself finds its way into our pages depends somewhat upon the interest the poet's commendation may awaken.*

For ourselves it is after this fashion that we are content to accept A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep: *It belongs with those greater and lesser lights of the Pre-Raphaelite period and what came of that mystic reincarnation of Art in the modern world. And it legitimately stands beside such other utterances as* Hand and Soul *and* Love's Nocturn. *He who wrote out this Vision-poem in prose is as genuinely inspired as any one of that glorious band whose true associate he was and will remain. Taken as a commentary upon what he did the* Vision *is a guide to his work; his Art harks back and is based upon this* Vision. *To know the one and ignore the other is to fail of finding the real Solomon. For in the last analysis the two are equal and have become as one flesh.*

SIMEON SOLOMON:
NOTES ON "HIS VISION OF LOVE"
AND OTHER STUDIES
By
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

SIMEON SOLOMON:

NOTES ON HIS "VISION OF LOVE" AND OTHER STUDIES.

If it may be said with perfect accuracy that in all plastic art, whether the language chosen be of words or forms, of sounds or colours, beauty is the only truth, and nothing not beautiful is true; yet this axiom of a great living artist and critic must not be so construed as to imply forgetfulness of the manifold and multiform nature of beauty. To one interpreter the terror or the pity of it, the shadow or the splendour, will appear as its main aspect, as that which gives him his fittest material for work or speech, the substance most pliable to his spirit, the form most suggestive to his hand; to another its simplicity or its mystery, its community or its specialty of gifts. Each servant serves under the compulsion of his own charm; each spirit has its own chain. Upon men in whom there is, so to speak, a compound genius, an intermixture of spiritual forces, a confluence of separate yet conspiring influences, diverse in source yet congruous in

result — upon men in whose eyes the boundary lines of the several conterminous arts appear less as lines of mere distinction than as lines of mutual alliance — the impression of the mystery in all beauty, and in all defects that fall short of it, and in all excesses that overbear it, is likely to have a special hold. The subtle interfusion of art with art, of sound with form, of vocal words with silent colours, is as perceptible to the sense and as inexplicable to the understanding of such men as the interfusion of spirit with flesh is to all men in common; and in fact when perceived of no less significance than this, but rather a part and complement of the same truth. One of such artists, and at once recognisable as such, is Mr. Simeon Solomon. There is not, for instance, more of the painter's art in the verse of Keats than of the musician's in Solomon's designs. As surely as the mystery of beauty — a mystery "most glad and sad," as Chaucer says of a woman's mouth — was done into colour of verse for ever unsurpassable in the odes "To a Nightingale" and on "Melancholy," so is the same secret wrought into perfect music of outline by the painter.

The "unheard melodies," which Keats, with a sense beyond the senses, perceived and enjoyed in the forms of his Grecian urn, vibrate in the forms of this artist's handiwork; and all their lines and colours,

> Not to the sensual ear, but more endeared,
> Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.

Since the first years of his very early and brilliant celebrity as a young artist of high imaginative power and promise, Mr. Solomon has been at work long enough to enable us to define at least certain salient and dominant points of his genius. It holds at once of east and west, of Greek and Hebrew. So much indeed does this fresh interfusion of influences give tone and shape to his imagination, that I have heard him likened on this ground to Heine, as a kindred Hellenist of the Hebrews. Grecian form and beauty divide the allegiance of his spirit with Hebraic shadow and majesty: depths of cloud unsearchable and summits unsurmountable of fire darken and lighten before the vision of a soul enamoured of soft light and clear water, of leaves and flowers and limbs more lovely than these.

For no painter has more love of loveliness; but the fair forms of godhead and manhood which in ancient art are purely and merely beautiful rise again under his hand with the likeness on them of a new thing, the shadow of a new sense, the hint of a new meaning; their eyes have seen in sleep or waking, in substance or reflection, some change now past or passing or to come; their lips have tasted a new savour in the wine of life, one strange and alien to the vintage of old; they know of something beyond form and outside of speech. There is a questioning wonder in their faces, a fine joy and a faint sorrow, a trouble as of water stirred, a delight as of thirst appeased. Always, at feast or sacrifice, in chamber or in field, the air and carriage of their beauty has something in it of strange: hardly a figure but has some touch, though never so delicately slight, either of eagerness or of weariness, some note of expectancy or of satiety, some semblance of outlook or inlook: but prospective or introspective, an expression is there which is not pure Greek, a shade or tone of thought or feeling beyond Hellenic contemplation; whether it be oriental or modern in

its origin, and derive from national or personal sources. This passionate sentiment of mystery seems at times to "o'erinform its tenement" of line and colour, and impress itself even to perplexity upon the sense of the spectator. The various studies, all full of subtleties and beauties definable and not definable, to which the artist has given for commentary the graceful mysticism of a symbolic rhapsody in prose, are also full to overflowing of such sentiment. Read by itself as a fragment of spiritual allegory, this written "Vision of Love revealed in Sleep" seems to want even that much coherence which is requisite to keep symbolic or allegoric art from absolute dissolution and collapse; that unity of outline and connection of purpose, that gradation of correlative parts and significance of corresponsive details, without which the whole aerial and tremulous fabric of symbolism must decompose into mere confusion of formless and fruitless chaos. Even allegory or prophecy must live and work by rule as well as by rapture; transparent it need not be, but it must be translucent. And translucent the fluctuating twilight of this rhapsody does

become in time, with the light behind it of the designs; though at first it seems as hard to distinguish one incarnation of love or sleep or charity from the next following as to disentangle the wings and wheels of Ezekiel's cherubim, or to discover and determine the respective properties and qualities of Blake's "emanations" and "spectres." The style is soft, fluent, genuinely melodious; it has nothing of inflation or constraint. There is almost a superflux of images full of tender colour and subtle grace, which is sure to lead the writer into some danger of confusion and repetition; and in such vague and uncertain ground any such stumbling-blocks are likely to be especial rocks of offence to the feet of the traveller. Throughout the whole there is as it were a suffusion of music, a transpiration of light and sound, very delicately and surely sustained. There are thoughts and fragments of thoughts, fancies and fantastic symbols, sometimes of rare beauty and singular force; in this for instance, of Night as a mother watching Sleep her child, there is a greater height and sweetness of imagination than in any but the sweetest and highest poetic

allegories. "And she, to whom all was as an open scroll, wept when she looked upon him whose heart was as the heart of a little child." The depth and tenderness of this conception of Night, omniscient with the conscience of all things wrought under her shadow, world-wide of sight and sway, and wise with all the world's wisdom, weeping for love over the innocence of her first-born, is great and perfect enough for the noblest verse of a poet. The same affluence and delicacy of emblems interwoven with every part of the allegory is kept up from the first dawn of memory to the last transfiguration of love. There is an exquisite touch in the first vision of Memory standing by the sea-side with the shell held to her ear whose voice "unburied the dead cycles of the soul," with autumn leaves showered on head and breast, "and upon her raiment small flecks of foam had already dried;" this last emblem of the salt small foam-flecks, sharp and arid waifs of the unquiet sea of life, light and bitter strays of barren thought and remembrance with the freshness dried out of them, is beautiful and new. Dim and vague as the atmosphere of such work

should be, this vision would be more significant, and not less suggestive of things hidden in secret places of spiritual reserve, if it had more body of drawing, more shapeliness of thought and fixity of outline. Not that we would seek for solidity in shadow, or blame the beauty of luminous clouds for confusion of molten outlines; but even in cloud there is some law of form, some continuous harmony of line and mass, that only dissolves and changes "as a tune into a tune." To invigorate and support this fair frame of allegory there should be some clearer infusion of a purpose; there should be some thread of clearer connection, some filament, though never so slender, to link vision again to vision, some clue, "as subtle as Arachne's broken woof," to lead the reader's perception through the labyrinth of sounds and shapes. Each new revelation and change of aspect has beauty and meaning of its own; but even in a dream the steps of progress seem clearer than here, and the process from stage to stage of action or passion is ruled after some lawless law and irrational reason of its own. Such process as this at least we might hope to

find even in the records of allegoric vision; in this mystery or tragedy of the passion of a divine sufferer "wounded in the house of his friends" and bleeding from the hands of men, those who follow the track of his pilgrimage might desire at least to be shown the stations of his cross. We miss the thread of union between the varying visions of love forsaken and shamed, wounded and forgotten; of guileless and soulless pleasure in its naked and melodious maidenhood, and passion that makes havoc of love, and after that even of itself also; of death and silence, and of sleep and time. Many of these have in them the sweetness and depth of good dreams, and much subtle and various beauty; and had we but some clue to the gradations of its course, we might thread our way through the Dædalian maze with a free sense of gratitude to the artificer whose cunning reared it to hide no monstrous thing, but one of divine likeness. It might have been well to issue with the text some further reproductions of the designs: those especially of the wounded Love from whose heart's blood the roses break into blossom, of Desire with body and raiment dishevelled

and deformed from self-inflicted strokes, of Divine Charity bearing Sleep down to the dark earth among men that suffer, of Love upborne by the strong arms and wings of Time, of the spirit that watches in the depth of its crystal sphere the mutable reflections of the world and the revolutions of its hidden things; all designs full of mystical attraction and passion, of bitter sweetness and burning beauty.

Outside the immediate cycle of this legend of love divine and human, the artist has done much other work of a cognate kind; his sketches and studies in this line have always the charm of a visible enjoyment in the vigorous indulgence of a natural taste and power. One of these, a noble study of "Sleepers and One that Watches," has been translated into verse of kindred strength and delicacy, in three fine sonnets of high rank among the clear-cut and exquisite "Intaglios" of Mr. John Payne. But the artist is not a mere cloud-compeller, a dreamer on the wing who cannot use his feet for good travelling purpose on hard ground; witness the admirable picture of Roman ladies at a show of gladiators,

exhibited in 1865, which remains still his masterpiece of large dramatic realism and live imagination. All the heads are full of personal force and character, especially the woman's with heavy brilliant hair and glittering white skin, like hard smooth snow against the sunlight, the delicious thirst and subtle ravin of sensual hunger for blood visibly enkindled in every line of the sweet fierce features. Mr. Solomon apparently has sufficient sense of physiology to share the theory which M. Alphonse Karr long since proposed to develope at length in a systematic treatise "sur la férocité des blondes." The whole spirit of this noble picture is imbued with the proper tragic beauty and truth and terror.

As the Hebrew love of dim vast atmosphere and infinite spiritual range without foothold on earth or resting-place in nature is perceptible in the mystic and symbolic cast of so many sketches and studies, so is a certain loving interest in the old sacred forms, in the very body of historic tradition, made manifest in various more literal designs of actual religious offices. One series of such represents on a small scale, with sin-

gular force and refinement, the several ceremonies of the sacred seasons and festivals of the Jewish year. Other instances of this ceremonial bias towards religious forms of splendour or solemnity are frequent in the list of the painter's works; gorgeous studies of eastern priests in church or synagogue, of young saint and rabbi and Greek bishop doing their divine service in "full-blown dignity" of official magic. I remember faces among them admirable for holy heaviness of feature and sombre stolidity of sanctitude. No Venetian ever took truer delight in glorious vestures, in majestic embroideries, in the sharp deep sheen and glowing refraction of golden vessels; none of them ever lusted more hotly after the solid splendours of metal and marble, the grave glories of purple raiment and gleaming cup or censer. This same magnificence gives tone and colour to his classic subjects which explains their kinship to designs apparently so diverse in aim. Modern rather than classical, as we have noticed, in sentiment and significance, they combine the fervent violence of feeling or faith which is peculiar to the Hebrews with the sensitive

acuteness of desire, the sublime reserve and balance of passion, which is peculiar to the Greeks. Something of Ezekiel is here mixed with something of Anacreon; here the Anthology and the Apocalypse have each set a distinct mark: the author of the Canticles and the author of the Atys have agreed for a while to work together. The grievous and glorious result of aspiration and enjoyment is here legible; the sadness that is latent in gladness; the pleasure that is palpable in pain. Fixed eyes and fervent lips are full of divine disquiet and instinctive resignation. All the sorrow of the senses is incarnate in the mournful and melodious beauty of those faces; they have learnt to abstain from wishing; they are learning to abstain from hope. Especially in such works as the "Sappho" and the "Antinous" of some years since does this unconscious underlying sense assert itself. The wasted and weary beauty of the one, the faultless and fruitful beauty of the other, bear alike the stamp of sorrow; of perplexities unsolved and desires unsatisfied. They are not the divine faces familiar to us: the lean and dusky features of this Sappho are unlike

those of her traditional bust, so clear, firm, and pure; this Antinous is rather like Ampelus than Bacchus. But the heart and soul of these pictures none can fail to recognise as right; and the decoration is in all its details noble and significant. The clinging arms and labouring lips of Sappho, her fiery pallor and swooning eyes, the bitter and sterile savour of subsiding passion which seems to sharpen the mouth and draw down the eyelids, translate as far as colour can translate her. The face and figure beside her are soulless and passive, the beauty inert as a flower's; the violent spirit that aspires, the satisfied body that takes rest, are here seen as it were in types; the division of pure soul and of mere flesh; the powerful thing that lives without peace, and the peaceful thing that vegetates without power. In the "Sacrifice of Antinous," he officiates before the god under the divine disguise of Bacchus himself; the curled and ample hair, the pure splendour of faultless cheek and neck, the leopard-skin and thyrsus, are all of the god, and godlike; the mournful wonderful lips and eyes are coloured with mortal blood and lighted with human vision.

In these pictures some obscure suppressed tragedy of thought and passion and fate seems latent as the vital veins under a clear skin. Intentionally or not as it may be, some utter sorrow of soul, some world-old hopelessness of heart, mixed with the strong sweet sense of power and beauty, has here been cast afresh into types. Elsewhere again, as in an earlier drawing which my remembrance makes much of, this dim tragic undertone is absent. The two ministering maidens in the Temple of Venus are priestesses of no sad god, preachers of no sad thing. They have not seen beyond the day's beauty, nor desired a delight beyond the hour's capacity to give. As the Epithalamium of Catullus to his Atys, so is this bright and sweet drawing to the Sappho. Here all is clear red and pale white, the serene and joyful colours of pure marble and shed rose-leaves: there dim green and shadows of dusky gray surround and sadden the splendour of fair faces and bright limbs. This artist affects soft backgrounds of pale southern foliage and the sudden slim shoots of a light southern spring; these often give the keynote to his designs, always adding to

them a general grace of shape and gravity of tone as unmistakable as any other special quality of work. But here nothing is deeper or darker than the fallen petals which spot the fair pavement of the temple. One girl, white-robed and radiant as white water-flowers, has half let fall the rose that droops in her hand, dropping leaf by leaf like tears; both have the languor and the fruitful air of flowers in a sultry place; their leaning limbs and fervent faces are full of the goddess; their lips and eyes allure and await the invisible attendant Loves. The clear pearl-white cheeks and tender mouths have still about them the subtle purity of sleep; the whole drawing has upon it the heavy incumbent light of summer but half awake. Nothing of more simple and brilliant beauty has been done of late years. Here the spirit of joy is pure and whole; but a spirit more common is that which foresees without eyes and forehears without ears the far-off features and the soundless feet of change; such a spirit as dictated the choice of subject in a picture of two young lovers in fresh fullness of first love crossed and troubled visibly by the mere shadow and

the mere breath of doubt, the dream of inevitable change to come which dims the longing eyes of the girl with a ghostly foreknowledge that this too shall pass away, as with arms half clinging and half repellent she seems at once to hold off and to hold fast the lover whose bright youth for the moment is smiling back in the face of hers —a face full of the soft fear and secret certitude of future things which I have tried elsewhere to render in the verses called "Erotion" written as a comment on this picture, with design to express the subtle passionate sense of mortality in love itself which wells up from "the middle spring of pleasures," yet cannot quite kill the day's delight or eat away with the bitter poison of doubt the burning faith and self-abandoned fondness of the hour; since at least, though the future be for others, and the love now here turn elsewhere to seek pasture in fresh fields from other flowers, the vows and kisses of these his present lips are not theirs but hers, as the memory of his love and the shadow of his youth shall be hers for ever.

In such designs the sorrow is simple as the beauty, the spirit simple as the form; in

others there is all the luxury and mystery of southern passion and eastern dream. Many of these, as the figure bearing the eucharist of love, have a supersexual beauty, in which the lineaments of woman and of man seem blended as the lines of sky and landscape melt in burning mist of heat and light. Others, as the Bacchus, have about them a fleshly glory of godhead and bodily deity, which holds at once of earth and heaven; neither the mystic and conquering Indian is this god, nor the fierce choregus of Cithæron. The artist's passionate love of gorgeous mysteries, "prodigious mixtures and confusions strange" of sense and spirit no less than "of good and ill," has given him the will and the power to spiritualise at his pleasure, by the height and splendour of his treatment, the somewhat unspiritual memory of Heliogabalus, "Emperor of Rome and High Priest of the Sun," symbolic in that strange union of offices at once of east and west, of ghostly glory and visible lordship, of the lusts of the flesh and the secrets of the soul, of the kingdom of this world and the mystery of another: the superb and luxurious power and subtlety of

the study take in both aspects of his figure, the strangest surely that ever for an instant overtopped the world.

There is an entire class of Mr. Solomon's designs in which the living principle and moving spirit is music made visible. His groups of girls and youths that listen to one singing or reciting seem utterly imbued with the spirit of sound, clothed with music as with a garment, kindled and swayed by it as fire or as foliage by a wakening wind. In pictures where no one figures as making music, the same fine inevitable sense of song makes melodies of vocal colour and symphonies of painted cadence. The beautiful oil painting of bride, bridegroom, and paranymph has in its deep ripe tones the same suffusion of sound as that of the evening hymn to the hours; the colours have speech in them, a noble and solemn speech, and full of large strong harmonies. In the visible "mystery of faith" we feel the same mighty measures of a silent song go up with the elevation of the host; and from the soundless lips of Love and Sleep, of Memory and of Dreams, of Pleasure and Lust and Death, the voice of their manifold mystery is audible.

In almost all of these there is perceptible the same profound suggestion of unity between opposites, the same recognition of the identity of contraries. Even in the gatherings of children about the knees of Love, as he tells his first tales to elder and younger lads and girls, there are touches of trouble and distraction, of faint doubt and formless pain on the fresh earnest faces that attend in wonder and in trance. Even in the glad soft grouping of boys and maidens by "summer twilight," under light bloom of branches that play against a gracious gleaming sky, their clear smiles and swift chance gestures recall some thought of the shadow as well as the light of life; and always there seems to rise up before the spirit, at thought of the might and ravage of time and "sad mortality," the eternal question —

> How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
> Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

But far other questions than this rise up behind it, as we gaze into the great and terrible mystery of beauty, and turn over in thought the gloss of far other commentators, the scrolls of strange interpreters,

materialist and mystic. In the features of these groups and figures which move and make music before us in the dumb show of lines and colours, we see the latent relations of pain and pleasure, the subtle conspiracies of good with evil, the deep alliances of death and life, of love and hate, of attraction and abhorrence. Whether suffering or enjoyment be the master expression of a face, and whether that enjoyment or that suffering be merely or mainly spiritual or sensual, it is often hard to say — hard often to make sure whether the look of loveliest features be the look of a cruel or a pitiful soul. Sometimes the sensible vibration as of living lips and eyes lets out the secret spirit, and we see the springs of its inner and confluent emotions. The subtleties and harmonies of suggestion in such studies of complex or it may be perverse nature would have drawn forth praise and sympathy from Baudelaire, most loving of all students of strange beauty and abnormal refinement, of painful pleasures of soul and inverted raptures of sense. There is a mixture of utmost delicacy with a fine cruelty in some of these faces of fair feminine youth which

recalls the explanation of a philosopher of the material school, whose doctrine is at least not without historic example and evidence to support it: "Une infinité de sots, dupes de cette incroyable sensibilité qu'ils voient dans les femmes, ne se doutent pas que les extrémités se rapprochent, et que c'est précisément au foyer de ce sentiment que la cruauté prend sa source. Parce que *la cruauté n'est elle-même qu'une des branches de la sensibilité*, et que c'est toujours en raison du degré dont nos âmes en sont pénétrées que les grandes horreurs se commettent." The matter of this passage is better than the style; by the presence of this element we may distinguish cruelty from brutality, a Nero from a Gallifet, a Brinvilliers from a "baby-farmer." In several of Mr. Solomon's designs we find heads emblematic of active or visionary passion upon which the seal of this sensitive cruelty is set; made beautiful beyond the beauty of serpent or of tiger by the sensible infusion of a soul which refines to a more delicate delight the mere nervous lust after blood, the mere physical appetite and ravenous relish for fleshly torture; which finds out

the very "spirit of sense" and fine root of utmost feeling alike in the patient and the agent of the pain. There are no bestial faces, no mere vile types of brutality, but only of this cunning and cruel sensibility which catches fire from the stroke it deals, and drinks as its wine of life the blood of its sentient sacrifice. The poignancy of this pleasure is patent and fervent in the face of the fair woman overlooking the fresh full agony in the circus; the aftertaste of fierce weariness and bitter languor that corrodes the soul is perceptible in the aspect of the figure representing Lust, with haunted eyes and savage haggard lips and barren body scored with blood, in the allegoric design of Love. Other faces again are live emblems of an infinite tenderness, of sad illimitable pity, of the sweetness of utter faith and ardour that consumes all the meaner elements of life; the fiery passion and hunger after God of St. Theresa, who might be taken as patroness of the Christian side of this painter's art: one whole class of his religious designs is impregnated with the burning mysticism and raging rapture of her visions, reflected as we feel them in

Crashaw's hymn of invocation from the furnace of her own fierce words and phrases of prostrate ardour and amorous appeal to her Bridegroom.

All great and exquisite colourists have a mystery of their own, the conscience of a power known to themselves only as the heart knows its own bitterness, and not more communicable or explicable. In this case the pictorial power is so mixed with personal quality, so informed and suffused with a subtle energy of sentiment, that a student from without may perhaps be able to note, not quite inaccurately or unprofitably, the main spiritual elements of the painter's work. In the work of some artists the sentiment is either a blank or a mist; and none but technical criticism of such work can be other than incompetent and injurious. The art of Mr. Solomon is of a kind which has inevitable attraction for artists of another sort, and is all the more liable to suffer from the verdicts of unskilled and untrained judgments. But an artist of his rank and quality has no need to cry out against the rash intrusion of critical stragglers from the demesne of any other art.

He can afford the risk of such sympathies, for his own is rich in the qualities of those others also, in musical and poetic excellence not less positive than the pictorial; and as artist he stands high enough to be above all chance of the imputation cast on some that they seek comfort in the ignorant admiration and reciprocal sympathy of men who cultivate some alien line of art, for conscious incompetence and failure in their own; fain to find shelter for bad painting under the plea of poetic feeling, or excuse for bad verse under the plea of good thought or sentiment. By right of his innate energies and actual performances, he claims kinship and alliance with the foremost in all fields of art, while holding in his own a special and memorable place. Withdrawn from the roll of artists, his name would leave a void impossible to fill up by any worthiest or ablest substitute; by any name of master in the past or disciple in the present or future. The one high test requisite for all genuine and durable honour is beyond all question his; he is himself alone, and one whose place no man can take. They only, but they assuredly, of whom this can be

said, may trust in their life to come. Time wears out the names of the best imitators and followers; but he whose place is his own, and that place high among his fellows, may be content to leave his life's work with all confidence to time.

The Bibelot

THAT long "out-of-print" volume The Symbolist Movement in Literature *(1899,) by Mr. Arthur Symons has at last reappeared, to the delight of his admirers, in a second and revised edition (1908). From the earlier book we have already reprinted in our pages the essays on* Gérard de Nerval *and on* Stéphane Mallarmé. *We now come to* Maeterlinck as a Mystic *which by many of our readers may be accepted as the most vital contribution of all. For Maeterlinck is still living and with each fresh emanation from his untiring and unresting brain the world is coming more and more into touch with what at first sight seemed destined to begin and end as specimens expressive of premature and befogged ideas: the sort of thing in a word, that might be beautiful but was scarcely susceptible of analysis and was by no manner of means either logic or poetry!*

Well! a little less than two decades have changed all such estimates. That unfortunate label "the Belgian Shakespeare" having done its evil share in the work of belittlement has ceased to vex

any one whose critical opinion is worth while, and Maeterlinck emerges saved even from his friends! What Professor Mackail wrote ten years ago in his Introduction to Aglavaine and Selysette *may well stand as a fine and perhaps final appreciation:*

"*This inner beauty of human life, of which M. Maeterlinck is so curious and subtle an interpreter, is also its inner truth.* Haec omnia in figura contingebant illis: scripta sunt autem ad correptionem nostram, in quos fines seculorum devenerunt. *We live in a period rich almost beyond parallel in accumulated treasures of beauty, produced by the great artists and thinkers of Western Europe during the last hundred years. But it is only from living art of its own that any age can draw real life. It relieves the darkness of our outlook to see, amid the triumph of an ugliness that grows day by day more insolent, more elaborate, more all-pervasive, the unconquerable resurgence of beauty* — la domination d'une áme qui se laisse étre belle."

MAETERLINCK AS A MYSTIC

By
ARTHUR SYMONS.

"It is in and through Symbols that man, consciously or unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being: those ages, moreover, are accounted the noblest which can the best recognise symbolical worth, and prize it highest."

CARLYLE.

MAETERLINCK AS A MYSTIC.

THE secret of things which is just beyond the most subtle words, the secret of the expressive silences, has always been clearer to Maeterlinck than to most people; and, in his plays, he has elaborated an art of sensitive, taciturn, and at the same time highly ornamental simplicity, which has come nearer than any other art to being the voice of silence. To Maeterlinck the theatre has been, for the most part, no more than one of the disguises by which he can express himself, and with his book of meditations on the inner life, *Le Trésor des Humbles*, he may seem to have dropped his disguise.

All art hates the vague; not the mysterious, but the vague; two opposites very commonly confused, as the secret with the obscure, the infinite with the indefinite. And the artist who is also a mystic hates the vague with a more profound hatred than any other artist. Thus Maeterlinck, endeavouring to clothe mystical conceptions in concrete form, has invented a drama so precise, so curt, so arbitrary in its limits, that it can safely be confided to the masks

and feigned voices of marionettes. His theatre of artificial beings, who are at once more ghostly and more mechanical than the living actors whom we are accustomed to see, in so curious a parody of life, moving with a certain freedom of action across the stage, may be taken as itself a symbol of the aspect under which what we fantastically term "real life" presents itself to the mystic. Are we not all puppets, in a theatre of marionettes, in which the parts we play, the dresses we wear, the very emotion whose dominance gives its express form to our faces, have all been chosen for us; in which I, it may be, with curled hair and a Spanish cloak, play the romantic lover, sorely against my will, while you, a "fair penitent" for no repented sin, pass whitely under a nun's habit? And as our parts have been chosen for us, our motions controlled from behind the curtain, so the words we seem to speak are but spoken through us, and we do but utter fragments of some elaborate invention, planned for larger ends than our personal display or convenience, but to which, all the same, we are in a humble degree necessary. This symbolical theatre, its very existence

being a symbol, has perplexed many minds, to some of whom it has seemed puerile, a child's mystification of small words and repetitions, a thing of attitudes and omissions; while others, yet more unwisely, have compared it with the violent, rhetorical, most human drama of the Elizabethans, with Shakespeare himself, to whom all the world was a stage, and the stage all this world, certainly. A sentence, already famous, of the *Trésor des Humbles*, will tell you what it signifies to Maeterlinck himself.

"I have come to believe," he writes, in *Le Tragique Quotidien*, "that an old man seated in his armchair, waiting quietly under the lamplight, listening without knowing it to all the eternal laws which reign about his house, interpreting without understanding it all that there is in the silence of doors and windows, and in the little voice of light, enduring the presence of his soul and of his destiny, bowing his head a little, without suspecting that all the powers of the earth intervene and stand on guard in the room like attentive servants, not knowing that the sun itself suspends above the abyss the little table on which he rests his elbow, and

that there is not a star in the sky nor a force in the soul which is indifferent to the motion of a falling eyelid or a rising thought —I have come to believe that this motionless old man lived really a more profound, human, and universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who gains a victory, or the husband who 'avenges his honour.' "

That, it seems to me, says all there is to be said of the intention of this drama which Maeterlinck has evoked; and, of its style, this other sentence, which I take from the same essay: "It is only the words that at first sight seem useless which really count in a work."

This drama, then, is a drama founded on philosophical ideas, apprehended emotionally; on the sense of the mystery of the universe, of the weakness of humanity, that sense which Pascal expressed when he said: *Ce qui m'étonne le plus est de voir que tout le monde n'est pas étonné de sa faiblesse;* with an acute feeling of the pathetic ignorance in which the souls nearest to one another look out upon their neighbours. It is a drama in which the interest is concentrated on

vague people, who are little parts of the universal consciousness, their strange names being but the pseudonyms of obscure passions, intimate emotions. They have the fascination which we find in the eyes of certain pictures, so much more real and disquieting, so much more permanent with us, than living people. And they have the touching simplicity of children; they are always children in their ignorance of themselves, of one another, and of fate. And, because they are so disembodied of the more trivial accidents of life, they give themselves without limitation to whatever passionate instinct possesses them. I do not know a more passionate love-scene than that scene in the wood beside the fountain, where Pelléas and Mélisande confess the strange burden which has come upon them. When the soul gives itself absolutely to love, all the barriers of the world are burnt away, and all its wisdom and subtlety are as incense poured on a flame. Morality, too, is burnt away, no longer exists, any more than it does for children or for God.

Maeterlinck has realised, better than any one else, the significance, in life and art, of

mystery. He has realised how unsearchable is the darkness out of which we have but just stepped, and the darkness into which we are about to pass. And he has realised how the thought and sense of that twofold darkness invade the little space of light in which, for a moment, we move; the depth to which they shadow our steps, even in that moment's partial escape. But in some of his plays he would seem to have apprehended this mystery as a thing merely or mainly terrifying; the actual physical darkness surrounding blind men, the actual physical approach of death as the intruder; he has shown us people huddled at a window, out of which they are almost afraid to look, or beating at a door, the opening of which they dread. Fear shivers through these plays, creeping across our nerves like a damp mist coiling up out of a valley. And there is beauty, certainly, in this "vague spiritual fear;" but a less obvious kind of beauty than that which gives its profound pathos to *Aglavaine et Sélysette*, the one play written since the writing of the essays. Here is mystery, which is also pure beauty, in these delicate approaches of intellectual

pathos, in which suffering and death and error become transformed into something almost happy, so full is it of strange light.

And the aim of Maeterlinck, in his plays, is not only to render the soul and the soul's atmosphere, but to reveal this strangeness, pity, and beauty through beautiful pictures. No dramatist has ever been so careful that his scenes should be in themselves beautiful, or has made the actual space of forest, tower, or seashore so emotionally significant. He has realised, after Wagner, that the art of the stage is the art of pictorial beauty, of the correspondence in rhythm between the speakers, their words, and their surroundings. He has seen how, in this way, and in this way alone, the emotion, which it is but a part of the poetic drama to express, can be at once intensified and purified.

It is only after hinting at many of the things which he had to say in these plays, which have, after all, been a kind of subterfuge, that Maeterlinck has cared, or been able, to speak with the direct utterance of the essays. And what may seem curious is that this prose of the essays, which is the prose of a doctrine, is incomparably more

beautiful than the prose of the plays, which was the prose of an art. Holding on this point a different opinion from one who was, in many senses, his master, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, he did not admit that beauty of words, or even any expressed beauty of thoughts, had its place in spoken dialogue, even though it was not two living actors speaking to one another on the stage, but a soul speaking to a soul, and imagined speaking through the mouths of marionettes. But that beauty of phrase which makes the profound and sometimes obscure pages of *Axël* shine as with the crossing fire of jewels, rejoices us, though with a softer, a more equable, radiance, in the pages of these essays, in which every sentence has the indwelling beauty of an intellectual emotion, preserved at the same height of tranquil ecstasy from first page to last. There is a sort of religious calm in these deliberate sentences, into which the writer has known how to introduce that divine monotony which is one of the accomplishments of great style. Never has simplicity been more ornate or a fine beauty more visible through its self-concealment.

But, after all, the claim upon us of this book is not the claim of a work of art, but of a doctrine, and more than that, of a system. Belonging, as he does, to the eternal hierarchy, the unbroken succession, of the mystics, Maeterlinck has apprehended what is essential in the mystical doctrine with a more profound comprehension, and thus more systematically, than any mystic of recent times. He has many points of resemblance with Emerson, on whom he has written an essay which is properly an exposition of his own personal ideas; but Emerson, who proclaimed the supreme guidance of the inner light, the supreme necessity of trusting instinct, of honouring emotion, did but proclaim all this, not without a certain anti-mystical vagueness: Maeterlinck has systematised it. A more profound mystic than Emerson, he has greater command of that which comes to him unawares, is less at the mercy of visiting angels.

Also, it may be said that he surrenders himself to them more absolutely, with less reserve and discretion; and, as he has infinite leisure, his contemplation being subject

to no limits of time, he is ready to follow them on unknown rounds, to any distance, in any direction, ready also to rest in any wayside inn, without fearing that he will have lost the road on the morrow.

This old gospel, of which Maeterlinck is the new voice, has been quietly waiting until certain bankruptcies, the bankruptcy of Science, of the Positive Philosophies, should allow it full credit. Considering the length even of time, it has not had an unreasonable space of waiting; and remember that it takes time but little into account. We have seen many little gospels demanding of every emotion, of every instinct, "its certificate at the hand of some respectable authority." Without confidence in themselves or in things, and led by Science, which is as if one were led by one's note-book, they demand a reasonable explanation of every mystery. Not finding that explanation, they reject the mystery; which is as if the fly on the wheel rejected the wheel because it was hidden from his eyes by the dust of its own raising.

The mystic is at once the proudest and the humblest of men. He is as a child who

resigns himself to the guidance of an unseen hand, the hand of one walking by his side; he resigns himself with the child's humility. And he has the pride of the humble, a pride manifesting itself in the calm rejection of every accepted map of the roads, of every offer of assistance, of every painted signpost pointing out the smoothest ways on which to travel. He demands no authority for the unseen hand whose fingers he feels upon his wrist. He conceives of life, not, indeed, so much as a road on which one walks, very much at one's own discretion, but as a blown and wandering ship, surrounded by a sea from which there is no glimpse of land; and he conceives that to the currents of that sea he may safely trust himself. Let his hand, indeed, be on the rudder, there will be no miracle worked for him; it is enough miracle that the sea should be there, and the ship, and he himself. He will never know why his hand should turn the rudder this way rather than that.

Jacob Boehme has said, very subtly, "that man does not perceive the truth but God perceives the truth in man;" that is, that whatever we perceive or do is not perceived

or done consciously by us, but unconsciously through us. Our business, then, is to tend that "inner light" by which most mystics have symbolised that which at once guides us in time and attaches us to eternity. This inner light is no miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, but the perfectly natural, though it may finally be overcoming, ascent of the spirit within us. The spirit, in all men, being but a ray of the universal light, it can, by careful tending, by the removal of all obstruction, the cleansing of the vessel, the trimming of the wick, as it were, be increased, made to burn with a steadier, a brighter flame. In the last rapture it may become dazzling, may blind the watcher with excess of light, shutting him in within the circle of transfiguration, whose extreme radiance will leave all the rest of the world henceforth one darkness.

All mystics being concerned with what is divine in life, with the laws which apply equally to time and eternity, it may happen to one to concern himself chiefly with time seen under the aspect of eternity, to another to concern himself rather with eternity seen under the aspect of time. Thus many

mystics have occupied themselves, very profitably, with showing how natural, how explicable on their own terms, are the mysteries of life; the whole aim of Maeterlinck is to show how mysterious all life is, "what an astonishing thing it is, merely to live." What he had pointed out to us, with certain solemn gestures, in his plays, he sets himself now to affirm, slowly, fully, with that "confidence in mystery" of which he speaks. Because "there is not an hour without its familiar miracles and its ineffable suggestions," he sets himself to show us these miracles and these meanings where others have not always sought or found them, in women, in children, in the theatre. He seems to touch, at one moment or another, whether he is discussing *La Beauté Intérieure* or *Le Tragique Quotidien*, on all of these hours, and there is no hour so dark that his touch does not illuminate it. And it is characteristic of him, of his "confidence in mystery," that he speaks always without raising his voice, without surprise or triumph, or the air of having said anything more than the simplest observation. He speaks, not as if he knew more than others,

or had sought out more elaborate secrets, but as if he had listened more attentively.

Loving most those writers "whose works are nearest to silence," he begins his book, significantly, with an essay on Silence, an essay which, like all these essays, has the reserve, the expressive reticence, of those "active silences" of which he succeeds in revealing a few of the secrets.

"Souls," he tells us, "are weighed in silence, as gold and silver are weighed in pure water, and the words which we pronounce have no meaning except through the silence in which they are bathed. We seek to know that we may learn not to know;" knowledge, that which can be known by the pure reason, metaphysics, "indispensable" on this side of the "frontiers," being after all precisely what is least essential to us, since least essentially ourselves. "We possess a self more profound and more boundless than the self of the passions or of pure reason. . . . There comes a moment when the phenomena of our customary consciousness, what we may call the consciousness of the passions or of our normal relationships, no longer mean anything to us, no longer

touch our real life. I admit that this consciousness is often interesting in its way, and that it is often necessary to know it thoroughly. But it is a surface plant, and its roots fear the great central fire of our being. I may commit a crime without the least breath stirring the tiniest flame of this fire; and, on the other hand, the crossing of a single glance, a thought which never comes into being, a minute which passes without the utterance of a word, may rouse it into terrible agitations in the depths of its retreat, and cause it to overflow upon my life. Our soul does not judge as we judge; it is a capricious and hidden thing. It can be reached by a breath and unconscious of a tempest. Let us find out what reaches it; everything is there, for it is there that we ourselves are."

And it is towards this point that all the words of this book tend. Maeterlinck, unlike most men ("What is man but a God who is afraid?"), is not "miserly of immortal things." He utters the most divine secrets without fear, betraying certain hiding-places of the soul in those most nearly inaccessible retreats which lie nearest

to us. All that he says we know already; we may deny it, but we know it. It is what we are not often at leisure enough with ourselves, sincere enough with ourselves, to realise; what we often dare not realise; but, when he says it, we know that it is true, and our knowledge of it is his warrant for saying it. He is what he is precisely because he tells us nothing which we do not already know, or it may be, what we have known and forgotten.

The mystic, let it be remembered, has nothing in common with the moralist. He speaks only to those who are already prepared to listen to him, and he is indifferent to the "practical" effect which these or others may draw from his words. A young and profound mystic of our day has figured the influence of wise words upon the foolish and headstrong as "torches thrown into a burning city." The mystic knows well that it is not always the soul of the drunkard or the blasphemer which is farthest from the eternal beauty. He is concerned only with that soul of the soul, that life of life, with which the day's doings have so little to do; itself a mystery, and at home only

among those supreme mysteries which surround it like an atmosphere. It is not always that he cares that his message, or his vision, may be as clear to others as it is to himself. But, because he is an artist, and not only a philosopher, Maeterlinck has taken especial pains that not a word of his may go astray, and there is not a word of this book which needs to be read twice, in order that it may be understood, by the least trained of attentive readers. It is, indeed, as he calls it, "The Treasure of the Lowly."

(1862.)

Serres Chaudes, 1889; *La Princesse Maleine*, 1890; *Les Aveugles* (*L'Intruse*, *Les Aveugles*), 1890; *L'Ornement des Noces Spirituelles*, *de Ruysbroeck l'Admirable*, 1891; *Les Sept Princesses*, 1891; *Pelléas et Mélisande*, 1892; *Alladine et Palomides*, *Intérieur*, *La Mort de Tintagiles*, 1894; *Annabella*, *de John Ford*, 1895; *Les Disciples à Saïs et les Fragments de Novalis*, 1895; *Le Trésor des Humbles*, 1896; *Douze Chansons*, 1896; *Aglavaine et Sélysette*, 1896; *La Sagesse et la Destinée*, 1898; *Théâtre*, 1901 (3 vols.); *La Vie des Abeilles*, 1901; *Monna Vanna*, 1902; *Le Temple Enseveli*, 1902; *Joyzelle*, 1903; *Le Double Jardin*, 1904; *L'Intelligence des Fleurs*, 1907.

Maeterlinck has had the good or bad fortune to be more promptly, and more violently, praised at the beginning of his career than at all events any other writer of whom I have spoken in this volume, [*The Symbolist Movement in Literature*]. His fame in France was made by a flaming article of M. Octave Mirbeau in the *Figaro* of August 24, 1890. M. Mirbeau greeted him as the "Belgian Shakespeare," and expressed his opinion of *La Princesse Maleine* by saying "M. Maeterlinck has given us the greatest work of genius that has been produced in our time, and the most extraordinary and the most naïve too, comparable, (dare I say?) superior in beauty to what is most beautiful in Shakespeare . . . more tragic than *Macbeth*, more extraordinary in thought than *Hamlet*." Mr. William Archer introduced Maeterlinck to England in an article called "A Pessimist Playwright" in the *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1891. Less

enthusiastic than M. Mirbeau, he defined the author of *La Princesse Maleine* as "a Webster who had read Alfred de Musset." A freely adapted version of *L'Intruse* was given by Mr. Tree at the Haymarket Theatre, January 27, 1892, and since that time many of Maeterlinck's plays have been acted, without cuts, or with but few cuts, at various London theatres. The earliest of his books to be translated into English were: *The Princess Maleine* (by Gerard Harry) and *The Intruder* (by William Wilson), 1892; *Pelleas and Melisanda* and *The Sightless* (by Laurence Alma-Tadema), 1892; *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics* (by J. T. Stoddart), 1894; *The Treasure of the Humble* (by A. Sutro), 1897; *Aglavaine and Selysette* (by A. Sutro), 1897; *Wisdom and Destiny* (by A. Sutro), 1898; *Alladine and Palomides* (by A. Sutro), *Interior* (by William Archer), and *The Death of Tintagiles* (by A. Sutro), 1899. The later plays and essays have all been translated into English, for the most part simultaneously with their appearance in French.

I have spoken, . . . chiefly of Maeterlinck's essays, and but little of his plays, and I have said all that I had to say without special reference to the second volume of essays, *La Sagesse et la Destinée*. Like *Le Trésor des Humbles*, that book is a message, a doctrine, even more than it is a piece of literature. It is a treatise on wisdom and happiness, on the search for happiness because it is wisdom, not for wisdom because it is happiness. It is a book of patient and resigned philosophy, a very Flemish philosophy, more resigned than even *Le Trésor des Humbles*. In a sense it seems to aim less high. An ecstatic mysticism has given way to a kind of prudence. Is this coming nearer to the

earth really an intellectual ascent or descent? At least it is a divergence, and it probably indicates a divergence in art as well as in meditation. Yet, while it is quite possible to at least indicate Maeterlinck's position as a philosopher, it seems to me premature to attempt to define his position as a dramatist. Interesting as his dramatic work has always been, there is, in the later dramas, so singular an advance in all the qualities that go to make great art, that I find it impossible, at this stage of his development, to treat his dramatic work as in any sense the final expression of a personality. What the next stage of his development may be it is impossible to say. He will not write more beautiful dramas than he has written in *Aglavaine et Sélysette* and in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. But he may, and he probably will, write something which will move the general world more profoundly, touching it more closely, in the manner of the great writers, in whom beauty has not been more beautiful than in writers less great, but has come to men with a more splendid energy.

Was I, when I wrote that, anticipating *Monna Vanna?*

The Bibelot

ONE comes to feel the inadequacy of selection when dealing with a poet of Mr. Austin Dobson's all-round excellence. The five hundred and odd pages which go to the gathering of his Collected Poems (*1897*) *seem to a professed admirer of his art none too many. Even the privately printed* Carmina Votiva (*1901*) *one would not do without if, as must needs be by the merest chance, a copy were procurable for love or money! And speaking for ourselves we believe we do but voice the feeling of all "Friends, that we know not and we know," who, on both sides of the Atlantic, do homage at this shrine of sempiternal verse. For it is no idle claim that in sheer range of mood attuned to subject, "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," Austin Dobson stands alone: none save himself could be his parallel!*

Like all else that has gone to the making of The Bibelot *these poems are what have remained to us through glad and sorry years. Over three decades ago we first read* Pot-Pourri *with its burden of retrospective tenderness—"Si jeunesse savait,"*

later on including it in those Songs of Adieu (*1893*), *which we may some day republish. At the same time the exquisite* Variation on Ronsard *found a place in our companion volume of* Old World Lyrics.

Now we offer as an additional and perhaps final choice the twin songs of Angiola, the lyric To a Greek Girl, *the inimitable Horatian echo-poem* To Q. H. F., *three ballades of unequalled technique let alone any question of poetic values, two delicate little elegiacs* The Child-Musician *and* The Cradle, *ending with what must remain for all time Mr. Dobson's* chef d'œuvre *his superb chant-royal,* The Dance of Death. Valete et plaudite!

FOR DECEMBER:
DIVERSI COLORES
BY HERBERT P. HORNE.

LYRICS
By
AUSTIN DOBSON.

POT-POURRI.

"Si jeunesse savait?—"

I PLUNGE my hand among the leaves:
(An alien touch but dust perceives,
Nought else supposes;)
For me those fragrant ruins raise
Clear memory of the vanished days
When they were roses.

"If youth but knew!" Ah, "if," in truth?—
I can recall with what gay youth,
To what light chorus,
Unsobered yet by time or change,
We roamed the many-gabled Grange,
All life before us;

Braved the old clock-tower's dust and damp,
To catch the dim Arthurian camp
In misty distance;
Peered at the still-room's sacred stores,
Or rapped at walls for sliding doors
Of feigned existence.

What need had we for thoughts or cares!
The hot sun parched the old parterres
And "flowerful closes;"
We roused the rooks with rounds and glees,
Played hide-and-seek behind the trees,—
Then plucked these roses.

Louise was one — light, glib Louise,
So freshly freed from school decrees
You scarce could stop her;
And Bell, the Beauty, unsurprised
At fallen locks that scandalised
Our dear "Miss Proper;" —

Shy Ruth, all heart and tenderness,
Who wept — like Chaucer's Prioress,
When Dash was smitten;
Who blushed before the mildest men,
Yet waxed a very Corday when
You teased her kitten.

I loved them all. Bell first and best;
Louise the next — for days of jest
Or madcap masking;
And Ruth, I thought, — why, failing these,
When my High-Mightiness should please,
She'd come for asking.

. . . . .

Louise was grave when last we met;
Bell's beauty, like a sun, has set;
And Ruth, Heaven bless her,
Ruth that I wooed, — and wooed in vain, —
Has gone where neither grief nor pain
Can now distress her.

TO Q. H. F.

SUGGESTED BY A CHAPTER IN SIR THEODORE MARTIN'S "HORACE."

("ANCIENT CLASSICS FOR ENGLISH READERS.")

"HORATIUS FLACCUS, B.C. 8,"
There's not a doubt about the date,—
You're dead and buried:
As you observed, the seasons roll;
And 'cross the Styx full many a soul
Has Charon ferried,
Since, mourned of men and Muses nine,
They laid you on the Esquiline.

And that was centuries ago!
You'd think we'd learned enough, I know,
To help refine us,
Since last you trod the Sacred Street,
And tacked from mortal fear to meet
The bore Crispinus;
Or, by your cold Digentia, set
The web of winter birding-net.

Ours is so far-advanced an age!
Sensation tales, a classic stage,
Commodious villas!

We boast high art, an Albert Hall,
Australian meats, and men who call
Their sires gorillas!
We have a thousand things, you see,
Not dreamt in your philosophy.

And yet, how strange! Our "world," to-day,
Tried in the scale, would scarce outweigh
Your Roman cronies;
Walk in the Park — you'll seldom fail
To find a Sybaris on the rail
By Lydia's ponies,
Or hap on Barrus, wigged and stayed,
Ogling some unsuspecting maid.

The great Gargilius, then, behold!
His "long-bow" hunting tales of old
Are now but duller;
Fair Neobule too! Is not
One Hebrus here — from Aldershot?
Aha, you colour!
Be wise. There old Canidia sits;
No doubt she's tearing you to bits.

And look, dyspeptic, brave, and kind,
Comes dear Mæcenas, half behind
Terentia's skirting;

Here's Pyrrha, "golden-haired" at will;
Prig Damasippus, preaching still;
Asterie flirting,—
Radiant, of course. We'll make her black,—
Ask her when Gyges' ship comes back.

So with the rest. Who will may trace
Behind the new each elder face
Defined as clearly;
Science proceeds, and man stands still;
Our "world" to-day's as good or ill,—
As cultured (nearly),—
As yours was, Horace! You alone,
Unmatched, unmet, we have not known.

THE CHILD-MUSICIAN.

He had played for his lordship's levee,
He had played for her ladyship's whim,
Till the poor little head was heavy,
And the poor little brain would swim.

And the face grew peaked and eerie,
And the large eyes strange and bright,
And they said — too late — "He is weary!
He shall rest for, at least, To-night!"

But at dawn, when the birds were waking,
As they watched in the silent room,
With the sound of a strained cord breaking,
A something snapped in the gloom.

'Twas a string of his violoncello,
And they heard him stir in his bed: —
"Make room for a tired little fellow,
Kind God! —" was the last that he said.

THE PARADOX OF TIME.

(A VARIATION ON RONSARD.)

"Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma dame!
Las! le temps non: mais NOUS *nous en allons!"*

TIME goes, you say? Ah no!
Alas, Time stays, *we* go;
Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For Youth were always ours?
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Ours is the eyes' deceit
Of men whose flying feet
Lead through some landscape low;
We pass, and think we see
The earth's fixed surface flee:—
Alas, Time stays,—we go!

Once in the days of old,
Your locks were curling gold,
And mine had shamed the crow.
Now, in the self-same stage,
We've reached the silver age;
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Once, when my voice was strong,
I filled the woods with song
  To praise your "rose" and "snow;"
My bird, that sang, is dead;
Where are your roses fled?
  Alas, Time stays, — we go!

See, in what traversed ways,
What backward Fate delays
  The hopes we used to know;
Where are our old desires? —
Ah, where those vanished fires?
  Time goes, you say? — ah no!

How far, how far, O Sweet,
The past behind our feet
  Lies in the even-glow!
Now, on the forward way,
Let us fold hands, and pray;
  Alas, Time stays, — *we* go!

TO A GREEK GIRL.

With breath of thyme and bees that hum,
Across the years you seem to come,—
Across the years with nymph-like head,
And wind-blown brows unfilleted;
A girlish shape that slips the bud
In lines of unspoiled symmetry;
A girlish shape that stirs the blood
With pulse of Spring, Autonoë!

Where'er you pass, — where'er you go,
I hear the pebbly rillet flow;
Where'er you go, — where'er you pass,
There comes a gladness on the grass;
You bring blithe airs where'er you tread,—
Blithe airs that blow from down and sea;
You wake in me a Pan not dead,—
Not wholly dead! — Autonoë!

How sweet with you on some green sod
To wreathe the rustic garden-god;
How sweet beneath the chestnut's shade
With you to weave a basket-braid;
To watch across the stricken chords
Your rosy-twinkling fingers flee;
To woo you in soft woodland words,
With woodland pipe, Autonoë!

In vain, — in vain! The years divide:
Where Thamis rolls a murky tide,
I sit and fill my painful reams,
And see you only in my dreams; —
A vision, like Alcestis, brought
From under-lands of Memory,—
A dream of Form in days of Thought,—
A dream, — a dream, Autonoë!

A FLOWER SONG OF ANGIOLA.

Down where the garden grows,
Gay as a banner,
Spake to her mate the Rose
After this manner:—
"We are the first of flowers,
Plain-land or hilly,
All reds and whites are ours,
Are they not, Lily?"

Then to the flowers I spake,—
"Watch ye my Lady
Gone to the leafy brake,
Silent and shady;
When I am near to her,
Lily, she knows;
How I am dear to her,
Look to it, Rose."

Straightway the Blue-bell stooped,
Paler for pride,
Down where the Violet drooped,
Shy, at her side:—
"Sweetheart, save me and you,
Where has the summer kist
Flowers of as fair a hue,—
Turkis or Amethyst?"

Therewith I laughed aloud,
Spake on this wise,
"O little flowers so proud,
Have ye seen eyes
Change through the blue in them,—
Change till the mere
Loving that grew in them
Turned to a tear?

"Flowers, ye are bright of hue,
Delicate, sweet;
Flowers, and the sight of you
Lightens men's feet;
Yea, but her worth to me,
Flowerets, even,
Sweetening the earth to me,
Sweeteneth heaven.

"This, then, O Flowers, I sing;
God, when He made ye,
Made yet a fairer thing
Making my Lady;—
Fashioned her tenderly,
Giving all weal to her;—
Girdle ye slenderly,
Go to her, kneel to her,—

"Saying, 'He sendeth us,
He the most dutiful,

Meetly he endeth us,
  Maiden most beautiful!
Let us get rest of you,
  Sweet, in your breast;—
Die, being prest of you,
  Die, being blest.'"

THE CRADLE.

How steadfastly she'd worked at it!
  How lovingly had drest
With all her would-be-mother's wit
  That little rosy nest!

How longingly she'd hung on it!—
  It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
  A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
  Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never prest . . .
  Her coffin was his bed.

A SONG OF ANGIOLA IN HEAVEN.

"Vale, unica!"

FLOWERS, — that have died upon my Sweet,
Lulled by the rhythmic dancing beat
Of her young bosom under you,—
Now will I show you such a thing
As never, through thick buds of Spring,
Betwixt the daylight and the dew,
The Bird whose being no man knows —
The voice that waketh all night through —
Tells to the Rose.

For lo, — a garden-place I found,
Well filled of leaves, and stilled of sound,
Well flowered, with red fruit marvellous;
And 'twixt the shining trunks would flit
Tall knights and silken maids, or sit
With faces bent and amorous; —
There, in the heart thereof, and crowned
With woodbine and amaracus,
My Love I found.

Alone she walked, — ah, well I wis,
My heart leapt up for joy of this! —
Then when I called to her her name,—
The name, that like a pleasant thing

Men's lips remember, murmuring,
At once across the sward she came,—
Full fain she seemed, my own dear maid,
And askèd ever as she came,
"Where hast thou stayed?"

"Where hast thou stayed?"—she asked as though
The long years were an hour ago;
But I spake not, nor answerèd,
For, looking in her eyes, I saw,
A light not lit of mortal law;
And in her clear cheek's changeless red,
And sweet, unshaken speaking found
That in this place the Hours were dead,
And Time was bound.

"This is well done,"—she said,—"in thee,
O Love, that thou art come to me,
To this green garden glorious;
Now truly shall our life be sped
In joyance and all goodlihed,
For here all things are fair to us,
And none with burden is oppressed,
And none is poor or piteous,—
For here is Rest.

"No formless Future blurs the sky;
Men mourn not here, with dull dead eye,
By shrouded shapes of Yesterday;

Betwixt the Coming and the Past
The flawless life hangs fixen fast
  In one unwearying To-Day,
That darkens not; for Sin is shriven,
  Death from the doors is thrust away,
    And here is Heaven."

At "Heaven" she ceased; — and lifted up
Her fair head like a flower-cup,
  With rounded mouth, and eyes aglow;
Then set I lips to hers, and felt,—
Ah, God, — the hard pain fade and melt,
  And past things change to painted show;
The song of quiring birds outbroke;
  The lit leaves laughed, — sky shook, and lo,
    I swooned, — and woke.

And now, O Flowers,
  — Ye that indeed are dead,—
Now for all waiting hours,
    Well am I comforted;
For of a surety, now, I see,
    That, without dim distress
    Of tears, or weariness,
My Lady, verily, awaiteth me;
So that until with Her I be,
    For my dear Lady's sake
    I am right fain to make

Out from my pain a pillow, and to take
Grief for a golden garment unto me;
Knowing that I, at last, shall stand
In that green garden-land,
And, in the holding of my dear Love's hand,
Forget the grieving and the misery.

"PRINCES! — and you, most valorous,
Nobles and Barons of all degrees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas!
Nothing we ask or of gold or fees;
Harry us not with the hounds we pray;
Lo, — for the surcote's hem we seize,—
Give us — ah! give us — but Yesterday!"

"Dames most delicate, amorous!
Damosels blithe as the belted bees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas!
Nothing we ask of the things that please;
Weary are we, and worn, and gray;
Lo, — for we clutch and we clasp your knees,—
Give us — ah! give us — but Yesterday!"

"Damosels — Dames, be piteous!"
(But the dames rode fast by the roadway trees.)
"Hear us, O Knights magnanimous!"
(But the knights pricked on in their panoplies.)
Nothing they gat or of hope or ease,
But only to beat on the breast and say: —
"Life we drank to the dregs and lees;
Give us — ah! give us — but Yesterday!"

YOUTH, take heed to the prayer of these!
Many there be by the dusty way,—
Many that cry to the rocks and seas
"Give us — ah! give us — but Yesterday!"

ON A FAN THAT BELONGED TO THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR.

CHICKEN-SKIN, delicate, white,
Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Loves in a riot of light,
Roses and vaporous blue;
Hark to the dainty *frou-frou!*
Picture above, if you can,
Eyes that could melt as the dew,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

See how they rise at the sight,
Thronging the *Œil de Bœuf* through,
Courtiers as butterflies bright,
Beauties that Fragonard drew,
Talon-rouge, falbala, queue,
Cardinal, Duke, — to a man,
Eager to sigh or to sue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

Ah, but things more than polite
Hung on this toy, *voyez-vous!*
Matters of state and of might,
Things that great ministers do;
Things that, maybe, overthrew
Those in whose brains they began;
Here was the sign and the cue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

WHERE are the secrets it knew?
Weavings of plot and of plan?
— But where is the Pompadour, too?
This was the Pompadour's *Fan!*

THE BALLAD OF THE BARMECIDE.

To one in Eastern clime, — 'tis said,—
There came a man at eve with "Lo!
Friend, ere the day be dimmed and dead,
Hast thou a mind to feast, and know
Fair cates, and sweet wine's overflow?"
To whom that other fain replied —
"Lead on. Not backward I nor slow; —
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

Thereon the bidder passed and led
To where, apart from dust and glow,
They found aboard with napery spread,
And gold, and glistering cups a-row.
"Eat," quoth the host, yet naught did show.
To whom his guest — "Thy board is wide;
But barren is the cheer, I trow;
Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

"Eat," quoth the man not less, and fed
From meats unseen, and made as though
He drank of wine both white and red.
"Eat, — ere the day to darkness grow.
Short space and scant the Fates bestow!"
What time his guest him wondering eyed,
Muttering in wrath his beard below —
"Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

LIFE, — 'tis of thee they fable so.
Thou bidd'st us eat, and still denied,
Still fasting, from thy board we go: —
"Where is *thy* feast, O Barmecide?"

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

(AFTER HOLBEIN.)

"*Contra vim* MORTIS
Non est medicamen in hortis."

HE is the despots' Despot. All must bide,
Later or soon, the message of his might;
Princes and potentates their heads must hide,
Touched by the awful sigil of his right;
Beside the Kaiser he at eve doth wait
And pours a potion in his cup of state;
The stately Queen his bidding must obey;
No keen-eyed Cardinal shall him affray;
And to the Dame that wantoneth he saith —
"Let be, Sweet-heart, to junket and to play."
There is no King more terrible than Death.

The lusty Lord, rejoicing in his pride,
He draweth down; before the armèd Knight
With jingling bridle-rein he still doth ride;
He crosseth the strong Captain in the fight;
The Burgher grave he beckons from debate;
He hales the Abbot by his shaven pate,
Nor for the Abbess' wailing will delay;
No bawling Mendicant shall say him nay;
E'en to the pyx the Priest he followeth,

Nor can the Leech his chilling finger stay . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

All things must bow to him. And woe betide
The Wine-bibber, — the Roisterer by night;
Him the feast-master, many bouts defied,
Him 'twixt the pledging and the cup shall smite;
Woe to the Lender at usurious rate,
The hard Rich Man, the hireling Advocate;
Woe to the Judge that selleth Law for pay;
Woe to the Thief that like a beast of prey
With creeping tread the traveller harryeth: —
These, in their sin, the sudden sword shall slay . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity, — nor will be denied.
When the low hearth is garnishèd and bright,
Grimly he flingeth the dim portal wide,
And steals the Infant in the Mother's sight;
He hath no pity for the scorned of fate: —
He spares not Lazarus lying at the gate,
Nay, nor the Blind that stumbleth as he may;
Nay, the tired Ploughman, — at the sinking ray, —
In the last furrow, — feels an icy breath,
And knows a hand hath turned the team astray . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity. For the new-made Bride,
Blithe with the promise of her life's delight,

That wanders gladly by her Husband's side,
He with the clatter of his drum doth fright;
He scares the Virgin at the convent grate;
The Maid half-won, the Lover passionate;
He hath no grace for weakness and decay:
The tender Wife, the Widow bent and gray,
The feeble Sire whose footstep faltereth,—
All these he leadeth by the lonely way . .
There is no King more terrible than Death.

ENVOY.

YOUTH, for whose ear and monishing of late,
I sang of Prodigals and lost estate,
Have thou thy joy of living and be gay;
But know not less that there must come a day,—
Aye, and perchance e'en now it hasteneth,—
When thine own heart shall speak to thee and say,—
There is no King more terrible than Death.

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honoured dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

The Bibelot

THE early Nineties saw a development in Typography as well as in the other arts and crafts, which reached its climax in Morris and the Kelmscott Press. Along with this evolution of material means to make life more beautiful a school of writers came upon the scene who, despite much crude endeavour, achieved a degree of success in some instances not far removed from lasting distinction. In other words "the Bodley Head" poets and essayists produced "results," as the names of Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Francis Thompson, William Watson, and William Butler Yeats, amply suffice to prove.

Among the earlier group who heralded this conquest of the younger generation over the lingering hosts of Victorian Philistia the founders of The Century Guild Hobby Horse (*1886–1892*) *should be assigned high rank; and of these, both from the excellence and variety of his attainments, Mr. Herbert P. Horne will easily and always remain a leading exemplar.*

A Londoner by birth, (1864) Mr. Horne

began his study of art under Mr. Selwyn Image, in company with whom the Hobby Horse *was projected, latterly assuming its sole editorship. As a writer he has few books to his credit, of which his only volume of verse,* Diversi Colores *(1891) for simple beauty of* format *and contents stands in a class by itself. (It had a bookmate of which we shall make use later on.) Printed for Mr. Horne at the Chiswick Press in an edition of 500 copies, with a designed title-page hard to surpass, this charming* bibelot *has long since passed into the jealous possession of worshippers of The Book Beautiful.*

Hence, to those of us who have yet to read these poems a reprint of Diversi Colores *will come as a very genuine Christmas gift. For ourselves it sets up a standard of bookmaking Art with a strain of Lyric loveliness combined seldom, if ever, found united elsewhere. In a word this tiny book delights the eye and satisfies the soul, and to have felt this is to feel what all true art must set forth in the end:* A thing of beauty is a joy forever!

FOR JANUARY:
A VISION OF LOVE REVEALED IN SLEEP
BY SIMEON SOLOMON.

DIVERSI COLORES

By

HERBERT P. HORNE.

A MORNING SONG FOR CHRISTMAS DAY: FOR MUSIC.

1. WAKE! what unusual light doth greet
   The early dusk of this our street?
2. It is the Lord! it is the Christ!
   That hath the will of God sufficed;
   That, ere the day is born anew,
   Himself is born a child for you.

CHORUS.

The harp, the viol, and the lute,
To strike a praise unto our God!
Bring here the reeds! Bring here the flute!
Wake summer from the winter's sod!
Oh, what a feast of feasts is given
To his poor servants, by the King of Heaven!

3. Where is the Lord?
2. Here is the Lord,
   At thine own door. 'Tis he, the Word;
   He, at whose face, the eternal speed
   Of orb on orb was changed to song.
   Shall he the sound of viols heed,
   Whose ears have heard so high a throng?
   Shall he regard the citherns strung,
   To whom the morning stars have sung?

Then wake, my heart, and sweep the strings,
The seven in the Lyre of Life!
Instead of lutes, the spirit sings;
With praise its quiet house is rife!
Oh, what a feast of feasts is given
To his poor servants, by the King of Heaven!

4. Who is the Lord?
2. He is the Lord,
That Light of light, that Chief of all!
3. Who is the Lord?
2. He is the Lord,
An outcast lying in a stall;
For in the Inn no room is left,
While the unworthy feast instead:
He of all welcome is bereft,
And hath not where to lay his head.

1. What fitter place could I prepare;
What better cradle, say, is there
Than this my heart, if that were fair?
2. Thou hast divined! A nobler part,
In man, or angel, or of earth, or skies,
There is not, than a broken heart:
The which thy God may ne'er despise.

CHORUS.

Lord, in my heart a little child,
Now that the snows beat far and wide,
While ever wails the tempest wild,
Good Lord, abide.

Nor go thou if the summer comes,
Nor if the summer days depart;
But chiefly make Thy home of homes,
Lord, in my heart.

HIC INCIPIT RESURRECTIO DOMINI NOSTRI JESU CHRISTI, QUI NOS DILEXIT.

Scaena in hortulo Josephi ab Arimathaea. Voces vigilantium, qui sunt nunc in mundo, audiuntur.

VIGILANTES.

We thank Thee, God! The morning breaks;
And on his shadowy wings of gray,
The night 's away:
Yet if it be, that he forsakes
The dawn's pale entrances,
Fore-knowing what shall follow with the day . . .
But who are these?

Intrant Maria Magdalene, Joanna, Maria Jacobi, et caeterae mulieres.

MARIA MAGDALENE.

Sirs, we are they, that ministered
To Jesus, while His words were heard
Within our land; and we are come
Weeping, each from her weeping home:
And thus, with gums and linen, speed
To tend Him yet; but sore our need,
Being but women, and alone,
For who shall roll away the stone?

PRIMA VOX AD MARIA MAGDALENA.

Nay, why so fast? 'Tis vain;
Thy Lord is dead.
Mary, 'tis done, the grief and pain,
As 'twas foresaid.
Behold! at last
The heart-ache, and the bitterness, is past.

SECUDA VOX AD MARIA JACOBI.

Wherefore this musk, this myrrh,
This ambergrice?
Can these thy love aver;
Or give Him ease?
No, no, 'tis vain!
Past is the heart-ache, and the bitter pain,

TERTIA VOX AD JOANNAM.

Joanna, what avails
Thy substance now?
Look! how himself Love fails
In this, as Thou.
Weep not! at last
The heart-ache, and the bitterness, is past.

MARIA JACOBI.

Peace, masters, peace! Behold ye not
The wondrous thing, that here is wrought?
Who have the stone thus rolled away

Too soon, against the judgment day?
Oh! who are they, that fain would have
Set free the dead, within the grave?

Discernunt Angelum lucifluum sedentem super lapidem sepulchri.

JOANA.

But what is he, that sits thereon?
No sun, before, so bright hath shone,
As these his robes, and those his wings;
Even the morning, when she sings
Her hymn to God, though fair to see,
Is not so beautiful as he.
His skirts like clouded crystals seem;
And like bright pearls, his feathers gleam.

MARIA MAGDALENE.

Evil of Evils! Shall no end
Come unto sorrow? Can ye lend
To that, ye do, your eyes and ears!
They have robbed Him: here is nothing but tears!

MARIA JACOBI.

Speak! Art thou Uriel?

JOANA.

Or hast thou message holier far,
That only Israfel
Can tell,
Whose heart-strings as a cithern are?

Nay, nay, I know thee, Azrail!
Thou, that dost fill
The world with death;
As David saith:
"What living man is there, that shall not know
Thy darkness, and thy sting also?"

VIGILANTES.

Hush, bow the knee! God, in the garden here,
Is walking with us. Swift is He
To anger: who could lightly bear
Sins, such as ours? Hush, bow the knee!

ANGELUS.

Be not afraid! for whom ye seek,
I know: even He, that hath sufficed
The bond of God, and Death made weak;
Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

Cantus.

VIGILANTES.

Why wait'st thou here, my heart? Go! seek the Lord
By night, by day, unceasing; and still urge
Onward thy way, although it lead toward
Earth's extreme edge, and to the ocean's verge.
Go, have no fear!
Why wait'st thou here, my heart; why wait'st thou here?

And finding Him, kiss thou His piercèd hands
The hands, that bled for thee; though not so much
As did His heart. Alas! who understands
Love great as this; yea, or the worth of such?
Go, have no fear!
Why wait'st thou here, my heart; why wait'st thou here?

Hic intrat Christus Surrectus.

MARIA MAGDALENE AD CHRISTU SURRECTUS.

Sir, they have hid Him, whom we loved;
Even Him in whom we lived, and moved,
And had our being. But thou alway
Keepest the garden, from day to day;
And knowest all, that here is done,
And who have rolled away the stone:
Therefore, from out thy charity,
Say in what hidden place may be
Our Master, and our Lord.

CHRISTUS SURRECTUS.

Mary!

MARIA MAGDALENE.

Rabboni!

OMNES.

Alleluia: Amen.

EGO SUM PRIMUS ET NOVISSIMUS, ET ECCE SUM VIVENS IN SAECULA SAECULORUM, ET HABEO CLAVES MORTIS, ET INFERNI.

Out of the jaws of Sin,
Out of the toils of Sloth,
Out of the death of Lust,
Out of the grave of Self,
I am He that is risen;
I am He that was dead, and is alive again.

Lo! Daniel, the Prophet,
Saw three men in Babylon
Cast into the furnace,
The furnace of this world;
Cast bound in the fires,
In the fires of the furnace;
Because they would bow not,
At the sound of the music,
At the sound of the sackbut,
The harp, and the psaltery;
And worship the image,
Leave God for the image,
Leave the Lord for the gold God
Of getting and spending;
For the gold of the image
Which Nebuchadnezzar
The King had set up.

Strong was the first man;
Wise was the second;
And the soul of the third man
Broke through his flesh
With the light, that is beauty:
And behold! they were loosed,
And they walked in the furnace,
Unharmed by the furnace;
And the smell of the fire
Passed not on their hats,
Nor their coats, nor their hosen.
And lo! as they walked
In the midst of the furnace,
Another was with them
In the fires of temptation,
In the fires of the furnace;
And the form of the fourth
Was as the Son of God:
I am the Son of God,
He that is risen,
He that was dead, and is alive again.

Know ye 'tis written,
"He that o'ercometh,
He shall inherit
All things, all treasures;
And I his God will be,
And he my Son. Saith God."

If ye would be the heirs,
The heirs of God,
Follow ye Me
For my burden is light,
My burden is light, and easy my yoke.
All have I overcome;
For I have risen
Out of the jaws of Sin,
Out of the toils of Sloth,
Out of the death of Lust,
Out of the grave of Self:
Therefore now I am made
Even the Son of God;
He that is risen,
He that was dead, and is alive again.

Strive ye to overcome;
I will be with you
In the fires of the furnace,
The furnace of this world.

I live for evermore,
Ever. Amen. Amen.
I have the keys of Hell,
I have the keys of Death,
Evermore, evermore.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

WE are but of such mortal mould,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
That the night can scarce withhold
In its shroud our sins from Thee.

That night comes, when Thou shalt come
Nos exaudi, Domine!
From Thy home to this sad home,
And die for us upon the tree.

If then the stars shine out so bright,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
That Thou seest by their light,
How great our sins and many be;

Thou wilt come, as they were not,
Nos exaudi, Domine!
Or as they were all forgot,
Or forgiven, Lord, by Thee.

WHEN Morning, with a hundred wings,
Broke through the curtain-chink; and wept
The earth, at what the day-break brings:
The body slept.

A little yet the early sky,
With gold and blue, shall be astir
For you; while you are passing by:
But not for her.

Go! let the voices of your feet
Speak thoughts beyond the tongue's control;
For now, in ways where all things meet,
Now sleeps the soul.

Go! nor forget the steadfast gaze,
That, loosed in Death, hath pierced the night
Of the great mystery of our days,
With eyes of light.

AMICO SUO.

WHEN on my country walks I go,
I never am alone:
Though, whom 'twere pleasure then to know,
Are gone, and you are gone;
From every side discourses flow.

There are rich counsels in the trees,
And converse in the air;
All magic thoughts in those and these
And what is sweet and rare;
And everything, that living is.

But most I love the meaner sort,
For they have voices too;
Yet speak with tongues, that never hurt,
As ours are apt to do:
The weeds, the grass, the common wort.

THE accomplished Raphael, he, whom prevalent Grace
Largely endued with certain power to scan,
And know, the various worlds of God, and man,
That he, from Art, all error might erase,
Beheld thee. Yea, within this very place,
This Umbrian valley, thou, perchance while ran
Thoughtless the moments by, didst raise those wan,
Deep, folded lids upon him, face to face.
Thou dost forget: but still in memory, he
Holds the calm features; whence, to daily flower
Breaks, from his pencil, as from Aaron's rod,
The secular image, which abides with thee
In many a secret, and devoted hour,
The face of Mary, mother of thy God.

TOT TIBI TAMQUE DABIT FORMOSAS ROMA PUELLAS; HAEC HABET, UT DICAS, QUIDQUID IN ORBE FUIT.

OH! had you eyes, but eyes that move
Within the light and realm of love,
Then would you, on the sudden, meet
A Helen walking down the street.

Here in this London 'mid the stir,
The traffic, and the burdened air,
Oh! could your eyes divine their home,
Then this were Greece, or that were Rome.

The state of Dian is not gone,
The dawn she fled is yet the dawn;
Her crystal flesh the years renew
Despite her bodice, skirt, and shoe.

Nor is she only to be seen
With Juno's height, and Pallas' sheen;
The knit, all-wondrously wrought, form
Of Cytherea, soft and warm,

Yet, like her jewelled Hesperus,
Puts forth its light, and shines on us;
Whene'er she sees, and would control,
Love, at the windows of the soul.

"DOWN IN A GARDEN SAT MY DEAREST LOVE."

DOWN in a garden, sat my dearest love;
Gay saffron flowers grew all around her;
The bluest sky shone in the heavens above:
Nay! had, but thus, the bright-limbed Cynthius found her,
He would have loved her, so that she had been
His Daphne, and his laurels green.

A SONG.

BE not too quick to carve our rhyme
And hearts, upon the tree of Time;
Lest one swift year prove, in its run,
They were but lines, and poorly done.
That longest lives, which longest grows
In stillness, and by sure degrees:
So rest you, Sweet;
That, going hence with calmer feet,
We may be friends, when friends are foes,
And old days merely histories.

SHE is living in Paradise Walk,
With the dirt and the noise of the street;
And heaven flies up, if she talk,
With Paradise down at her feet.

She laughs through a summer of curls;
She moves in a garden of grace:
Her glance is a treasure of pearls,
How saved from the deeps of her face!

And the magical reach of her thigh
Is the measure, with which God began
To build up the peace of the sky,
And fashion the pleasures of man.

With Paradise down at her feet,
While heaven flies up if she talk;
With the dirt and the noise of the street,
She is living in Paradise Walk.

HER eyes rest not upon my face,
But peep into my mind:
I trust, they find there no disgrace,
Or wanton, or unkind;
But all most fair, and stretching far,
As hills, and skies, and meadows are.

Some eyes are brown, and some are blue;
But hers are only dark to view:
Some eyes are blue, and some are gray;
But, oh! what colour, shall we say,
If she, perchance, should look *this* way?

"BELLA IMMAGINE D'UN FIOR."

LILIA, with the magic hair,
Unto you an holy hour
Love himself, constrained, hath granted;
Lilia with the magic hair,
Beautiful likeness of a flower.

Too happy, whom that time ordains,
By these high spells, to lie enchanted;
Red lips, white limbs with sapphire veins:
Lilia with the magic hair,
Beautiful likeness of a flower!

O Rare concent of all delight,
Put forth, and use, your utmost power;
Keep and entangle him to-night,
Lilia with the magic hair,
Beautiful likeness of a flower.

Lo! how her eyes, lo! how her hands,
  How every action, which she hath,
Are ever, through the fallen lands
  Whence is the victory of her path,
Swords, whose dominion knows no bounds;
  But makes us bleed,
    And need
Her lips to mend the wounds.

Ye blessed arrows of that Dear,
  Make speed, with all your sweet alarms;
Make speed, that Love may quickly bear
  My piercèd body to her arms:
Haste ye, whose battle knows no bounds;
  But makes us bleed,
    And need
Her lips to mend the wounds.

NAY, had but you, most beautiful, most loved,
Given me all my way:
Thrown back your gorgeous head out of pure joy,
Nor stirred at all, till I
Had with three hundred thousand kisses shut
Those honied eyes of yours;
My heart would not have sated been. No, no!
Not if our kisses' score
Surpassed the infinite ears of ripened corn,
That summer looks upon.

'Tis Nature's garden, that she made
For Love and noble Thought;
A wonder of green boughs and shade,
Through which a stream she brought,
With bubbling wells to cool the glade.

It were a place, if any were,
To tell the sacred sheaves
Of garnered joys, within this fair,
This quiet church of leaves,
Unto the calm, the patient air.

But Love, and Life, and holy Song,
Already fade, and lose
Their early zest; and soonest wrong
That, which we most would choose;
And mingle with the common throng.

NEC VIOLAE SEMPER, NEC HIANTIA LILIA FLORENT;
ET RIGET AMISSA SPINA RELICTA ROSA.

WHY are you fair? Is it because we know,
Your beauty stays but for another hour?
Why are you sweet? Is it because you show,
Even in the bud, the blasting of the flower?
Is it that we,
Already in the mind,
Too surely see
The thoughtless, ruthless, hurry of the wind
Scatter the petals of this perfect rose?

Why are you sad? Is it because our kisses,
That were so sweet in kissing, now are past?
But are not all things swift to pass as this is,
Which we desire to last?
Being too happy, we may not abide
Within the happiness, that we possess;
But needs are swept on by the ceaseless tide
Of Life's unwisdom, and of our distress:
As if, to all this crowd of ecstasies,
The present close
Were beauty faded, and deceivèd trust;
Locks, that no hands may braid; dull lifeless eyes,
Eyes, that have wept their lustre into dust.
Who knows?

A SONG FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.

WHERE is Pan, Pan and the crowd,
Whose fresh soul loved what mirth avowed?
Where do the gossip dells repeat
The silver sounds of lady-feet?
Where are the Nymphs, all white and red?
Are they too, like dead Helen, dead?
If these times a winter were,
Such as Syrinx most should fear,
Threatening her sandy home
With pale fears of frosts to come;
Then 'twere easy to be said,
Until June break again, they are but fled.
Where is Pan, Pan and the crowd
Of delicate Nymphs, whose laughter loud
Made old Time young, and did renew
Those hills of green, those skies of blue?

The world is weary, they are gone;
We are now all tears and sighs:
Well they loved not such as mourn,
Heavy hours, and weeping eyes.
They found their haunts changed and forlorn:
The world is weary; they are gone.

WINGED with my kisses go, go thou to her,
And bid her bind thee round her faultless throat;
Till thou, close-lying o'er the charmèd stir
Of her white breast, grow warm and seem to float
Away into the golden noon, the still,
Deep sunlight of her. Oh, sleep on! 'Tis thine,
Love's summer day. No, not June's throngèd hours
So glad are, when the songs of birds fulfil
Earth, and the breezes in the grass decline,
Held by the scent of many thousand flowers.

Yet loose that flood of kisses, which thou hast,
Into her bosom, and through all her hair;
Whispering, it is my utmost wealth amassed
For her, being fairest: nor do thou forbear,
Until she feel my spirit, like a blush,
Steal by her shoulder and frail neck; for when
The gorgeous scarlet, burning, shall have moved
Over her cheek, the little after-hush
Will tell to her, that I am happy then,
God! for how short a time, and she is loved.

Loved? Wherefore loved that never, but in thought,
May be possessed? Is it, that thus might grow
From out a look, a touch, long past to naught,
My Beatrice, and my perfect love; and so

Dwell with me here, although the while I guess,
'Tis but a dream, which only does me wrong?
O wretched truth! and yet the hour, that girds
My pensive nature with her loveliness,
Would bitter be, as 'tis unto this Song
To wed these thoughts too stern for dainty words.

Would 'twere no dream, this dream; this long, devout,
Untiring worship, vainly yet essayed;
This absolute love; then were the torturing doubt,
The troubled ocean of the soul allayed:
Desire would have her lust, and we have ease,
Here, from her everlasting thirst; nor pine
Vainly; but feel the fret, the harrowed breath,
The throbbing heart, that will not, will not cease,
Stilled into marble, Greek-like, calm, divine,
Remembering not the past. Stay! This is Death.

The Question.

WHAT is Love? Is Love in this,
That flies between us, in a kiss?
Nay, what is Love? Is Love the zest,
That wakes, when I unloose my breast?
But what is Love? Say now: who knows,
Or where he lurks, or how he shows?

The Answer.

Dearest, Truth is stern, I fear:
Love, as yet, can scarce be here.

Love is poor; nay, Love is sorry;
Tears, not kisses, chiefly stay him:
His sad weeds best tell his story;
Vain delights befool, bewray him.

Truth, alas! is hard to bear:
Know, as yet, Love is not here.

But, when the evil days are come,
If those same lips, which kiss you now,
Still make your tearful eyes their home,
And chide the sorrow from your brow;

Then say to your own heart, my Dear:
Abide, poor heart, for Love is here.

Love is a light, in darkened ways;
  Love is a path, in pathless lands;
Love is a fire, in winter days;
  A staff, in chill, unsteady hands.

Speak to your heart, my own, my Dear;
Say: this is Love, and Love is here.

ET SUNT COMMERCIA COELI.

I DID not raise mine eyes to hers,
  Although I knew she passed me near:
I said, "Her shadow round me stirs;
  It is enough, that she is here,
And that, for once, my way is hers."

I did not look upon her face,
  I knew with whom her heart confers;
For more, that moment had no place:
  I did not raise mine eyes to hers,
I did not look upon her face.

Do thou relent,
Her heart will break
She, for Love's sake,
To thee was sent.

She hath no tie,
Nor outward chain,
That might constrain,
Or keep thee nigh.

Only she may,
Through weeping eyes,
See whither lies
Thy changeful way.

Those unsaid vows,
And all thy love,
The pillars prove
Of that fair house.

Nay, then, relent,
Her heart will break;
She, for Love's sake,
To thee was sent.

MULIEREM EX OMNIBUS NON INVENI.

Of late, a sadness often strays
Here, in my mind: and what besides?
Within your hair, your face abides;
As summer, through the summer days.

Here do all times, once glad, arise,
Which now have lost their pleasantness:
Here dwell the voices of your dress;
Your fragrant ways, your lifted eyes.

Here are all words, you've said; whereof
Hope never made a tale more dear:
All, that in Danaë showed, is here;
But where is Love?

NANCY Dawson, Nancy Dawson,
Not so very long ago
Someone wronged you from sheer love, dear;
Little thinking it would crush, dear,
All I cherished in you so.
But now, what's the odds, my Nancy,
Where's the guinea, there's the fancy.
Are you Nancy, that old Nancy?
Nancy Dawson.

Nancy Dawson, Nancy Dawson,
I forget you, what you were;
Till I feel the sad hours creep, dear,
O'er my heart; as o'er my cheek, dear,
Once of old, that old, old hair:
And then, unawares, my Nancy,
I remember, and I fancy
You are Nancy, that old Nancy;
Nancy Dawson.

NON DELEBO PROPTER DECEM.

Ye priests of men, ye priests ordained
By the pure hands of God alone,
Live on! for we, through you, have gained
Our stablishment, that else were gone.
Awake, ye silent priests, and move
With power, throughout the approaching years!
Ye sinews of all human love,
Ye just of Sodom, Wrath appears!
Awake, awake, and gain for men
Time, yet, to lust and sin again!

CEASE, CEASE REPROACHFUL EYES!

CEASE, cease reproachful eyes! I have not done
Aught, that should bring me ever this unrest.
Tell me my fault! Have end! Search, one by one,
All possible errors, which have Time possessed:
I swear you, naught upon me shall you prove;
Unless it be a fault in me to love.

Oh! were you here with me, that I might speak
No matter what unheeded words, and vain;
I would persuade me, that the look I seek
Was given: but for me there must remain,
Beneath the one, unalterable guise,
This torture. Nay! Cease, cease; relentless eyes!

ALAS!

ALAS! your poet loves you: he,
Who dearer is to you, than I,
May better guide you o'er the sea
Of Life, beneath God's threatening sky;
Yet, yet remember this, that he
Can never, never your poet be.

CORONA CORINNAE.

BEING A CELEBRATION, IN SIX SONGS, OF A MASQUE OF DANCING, NAMED THE SEASONS.

I. TO HIS MUSE, BY WAY OF PROLOGUE.

Go! bid Love stay,
And make a maddening rhyme
Unto the dancing feet;
That may perchance repeat,
Within some other brain, another time,
This measure done, forgotten, put away!

Ah! if it might, might in an hastening year
Re-woo its magic from the ravening past;
Make suddenly the movement, the delight,
The gaiety, the freshness, re-appear:
Although no longer than a thought it last!
Ah, if it might!

II. OF THIS LAND OF LOVE'S.

THIS is Love's land, and here we find
The birds and flowers, that are his own;
Nothing there is unlike his mind,
Nothing, but he therein is shown:
For wings, and leaves, and blossoms, prove
Themselves the very heart of Love.

Here are the seasons, that Love's year,
Nay, that each hour of Love, must know;
Though they the gaudy June do bear,
They bring him wintry times also:
Still, still, methinks, he would not change;
Though, in their stead, 'twere his to range
Through the deep grass, by flowery roads,
Where gleam the white feet of the Gods.

BETWEEN the pansies and the rye,
Flutters my purple butterfly;

Between her white brow and her chin,
Does Love his fairy wake begin:

By poppy-cups and drifts of heather,
Dances the sun and she together;

But o'er the scarlet of her mouth,
Whence those entreated words come forth,
Love hovers all the live-long day,
And cannot, through its spell, away;
But there, where he was born, must die,
Between the pansies and the rye.

IV. TO HERRICK.

In vain, at all to my content,
Have I my thoughts through nature sent
To search, with keenest glance,
All things on high, around, below,
But for one figure, that would show
Corinna in the dance.

Either my brain is dull, or we
With narrow bounds content must be;
Contented, too, to find
The same sweet flowers, that used to win
The eyes of poets dead, within
The meadows of the mind:

For only this worn image wrought,
In marble words, the eluding thought
Justly; and one, I fear,
Familiar as the trees or sky:
"She dances like my heart, when I
"Set eyes upon my dear."

Still might I say, as well I could,
When thinking of a summer wood;
And, truly, one believes
It is the best yet hit upon:
"She dances like the dancing sun,
"Among the dancing leaves."

But even this, expressing much,
Yet wants, I think, the human touch,
  Which all such styles demand;
For though it laughs upon the wing
Of verse, 'tis but a pretty thing,
  And lacks the master hand.

Ah! Herrick, now where are those rhymes,
Which we in former, thoughtless, times
  Had deemed omnipotent
To tell, as never yet was told
In song, all things, which Life of old
  Has unto Beauty lent?

Truly, to thee each joy, that stirs
That secret, wayward, heart of hers,
  Is clay upon the wheel:
These you can fashion as you list;
But not the turning of her wrist,
  The glancing of her heel.

V. IF SHE BE MADE OF WHITE AND RED."

If she be made of white and red,
As all transcendent beauty shows;
If heaven be blue above her head,
And earth be golden, as she goes:
Nay, then thy deftest words restrain;
Tell not that beauty, it is vain.

If she be filled with love and scorn,
As all divinest natures are;
If 'twixt her lips such words are born,
As can but Heaven or Hell confer:
Bid Love be still, nor ever speak,
Lest he his own rejection seek.

VI. TO HIS MUSE IN INTERCESSION FOR LOVE.

Now all be hushed; all, all be wholly still;
For Love is far too glad for song or speech,
Love that hath stayed: now let him have his will;
The mouth, the eyes, the cheek, he did beseech.

Why should he sing? Is it not song enough,
That she, between those sighs that ever start
Suddenly from him, as from Boreas rough,
Should hear the measure from his beating heart?

Therefore constrain him, that he speak no word,
Till the consuming stillness do eclipse
All but delight: then shall no sound be heard,
Save only falling hair, and nestling lips.

HERE ends THE BIBELOT Volume Fourteen. Printed by Smith & Sale for Thomas B. Mosher and published by him at XLV Exchange Street Portland Maine. MDCCCCVIII.